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# THE HOLY KORAN



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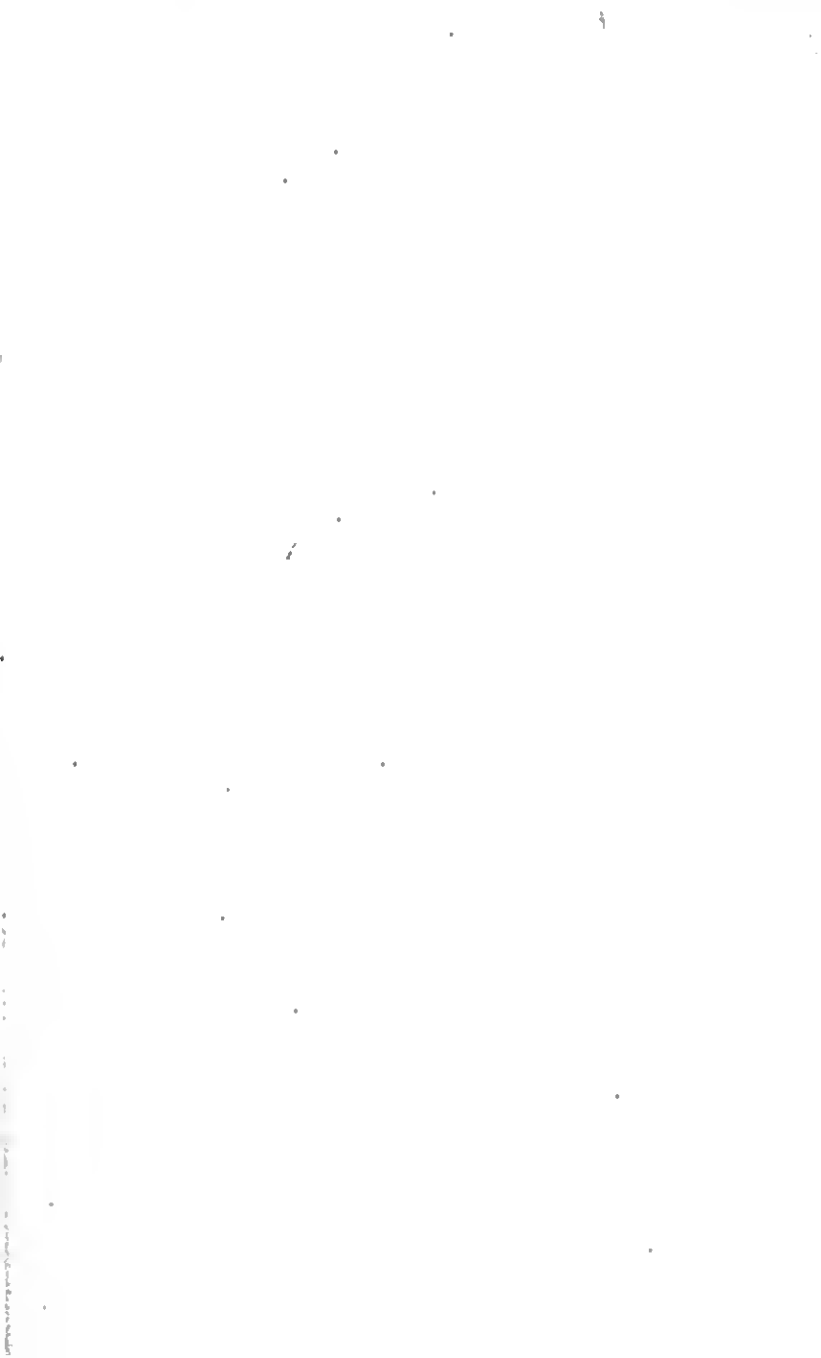
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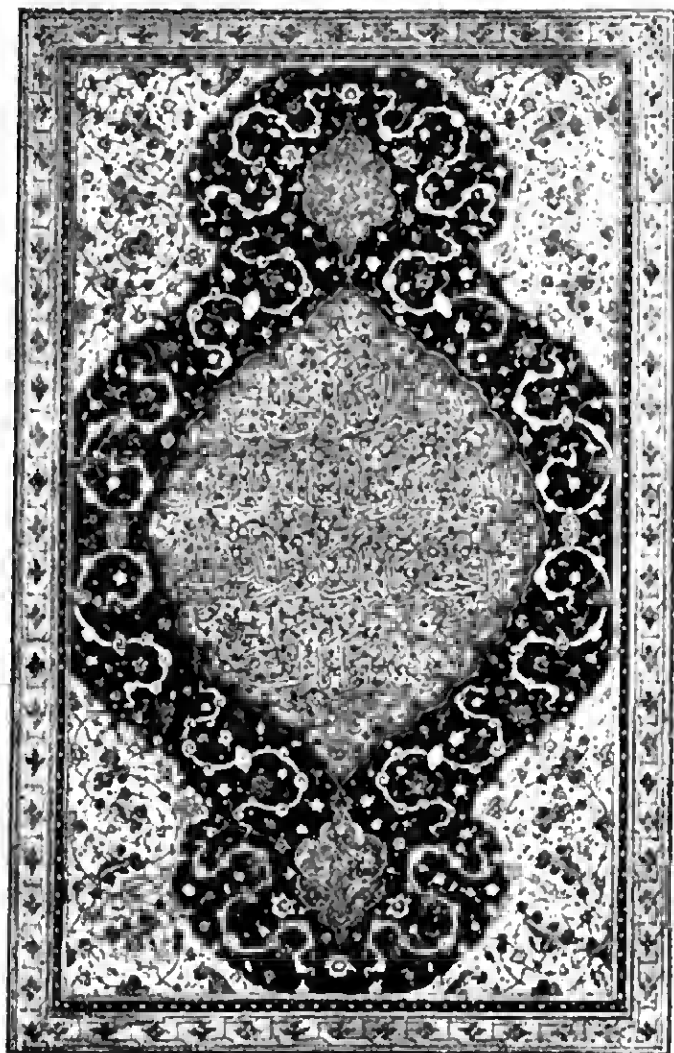
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OPENING VERSES OF THE KORAN

*Centre panel of illuminated page, Persian, 16th  
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# THE HOLY KORAN

*An Introduction With Selections*

by

A. J. ARBERRY

LITT.D., F.B.A.

856

297  
Arb.

LONDON

GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD

Ruskin House • Museum Street



FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1953

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

As a result of two Wars that have devastated the world men and women everywhere feel a twofold need. We need a deeper understanding and appreciation of other peoples and their civilizations, especially their moral and spiritual achievements. And we need a new vision of the Universe, a clearer insight into the fundamentals of ethics and religion? How ought men to behave? How ought nations? Does God exist? What is His Nature? How is He related to His creation? Especially, how can man approach Him? In other words, there is a general desire to know what the greatest minds, whether of East or West, have thought and said about the Truth of God and of the beings who (as most of them hold) have sprung from Him, live by Him, and return to Him.

It is the object of this Series, which originated among a group of Oxford men and their friends, to place the chief ethical and religious masterpieces of the world, both Christian and non-Christian, within easy reach of the intelligent reader who is not an expert—the undergraduate, the ex-Service man who is interested in the East, the Adult Student, the intelligent public generally. The Series will contain books of three kinds: translations, reproductions of ethical and religious art, and Background Books showing the surroundings in which the literature and art arose and developed. These books overlap each other. Religious art, both in East and West, often illustrates a religious text, and in suitable cases the text and pictures will be printed together to complete each other. The Background Books will often consist largely of translations. The volumes will be prepared by scholars of distinction, who will try to make them, not only scholarly, but intelligible and enjoyable.

Their contents will also be very varied—ethical and social, biographical, devotional, philosophic and mystical, whether in poetry, in pictures or in prose. There is a great wealth of material. Confucius lived in a time much like our own, when State was at war with State and the people suffering and disillusioned; and the "Classics" he preserved or inspired

show the social virtues that may unite families, classes and States into one great family, in obedience to the Will of Heaven. Asoka and Akbar (both of them great patrons of art) ruled a vast Empire on the principles of religious faith. There are the moral anecdotes and moral maxims of the Jewish and Muslim writers of the Middle Ages. There are the beautiful tales of courage, love and fidelity in the Indian and Persian epics. Shakespeare's plays show that he thought the true relation between man and man is love. Here and there a volume will illustrate the unethical or less ethical man and the difficulties that beset him.

Then there are the devotional and philosophic works. The lives and legends (legends often express religious truth with clarity and beauty) of the Buddha, of the parents of Mary, of Francis of Assisi, and the exquisite sculptures and paintings that illustrate them. Indian and Christian religious music, and the words of prayer and praise which the music intensifies. There are the Prophets and Apocalyptic writers, Zarathustrian and Hebrew; the Greek philosophers and the Christian thinkers—Greek, Latin, Medieval and Modern—whom they so deeply influenced. There is too the Hindu, Buddhist and Christian teaching expressed in such great monuments as the Indian temples, Barabudur (the Chartres of Asia), and Ajanta, Chartres itself and the Sistine Chapel.

Finally there are the mystics of feeling, and the mystical philosophers. In God-loving India the poets, musicians, sculptors and painters inspired by the spiritual worship of Krishna and Rama, as well as the philosophic mystics from the Upanishads onward. The two great Taoists, Lao-tze and Chuang-tze and the Sung mystical painters in China, Rūmī and other Sūfīs in Islam, Plato and Plotinus, followed by "Dionysius," Dante, Eckhart, Teresa and other great mystics and mystical painters in many Christian lands.

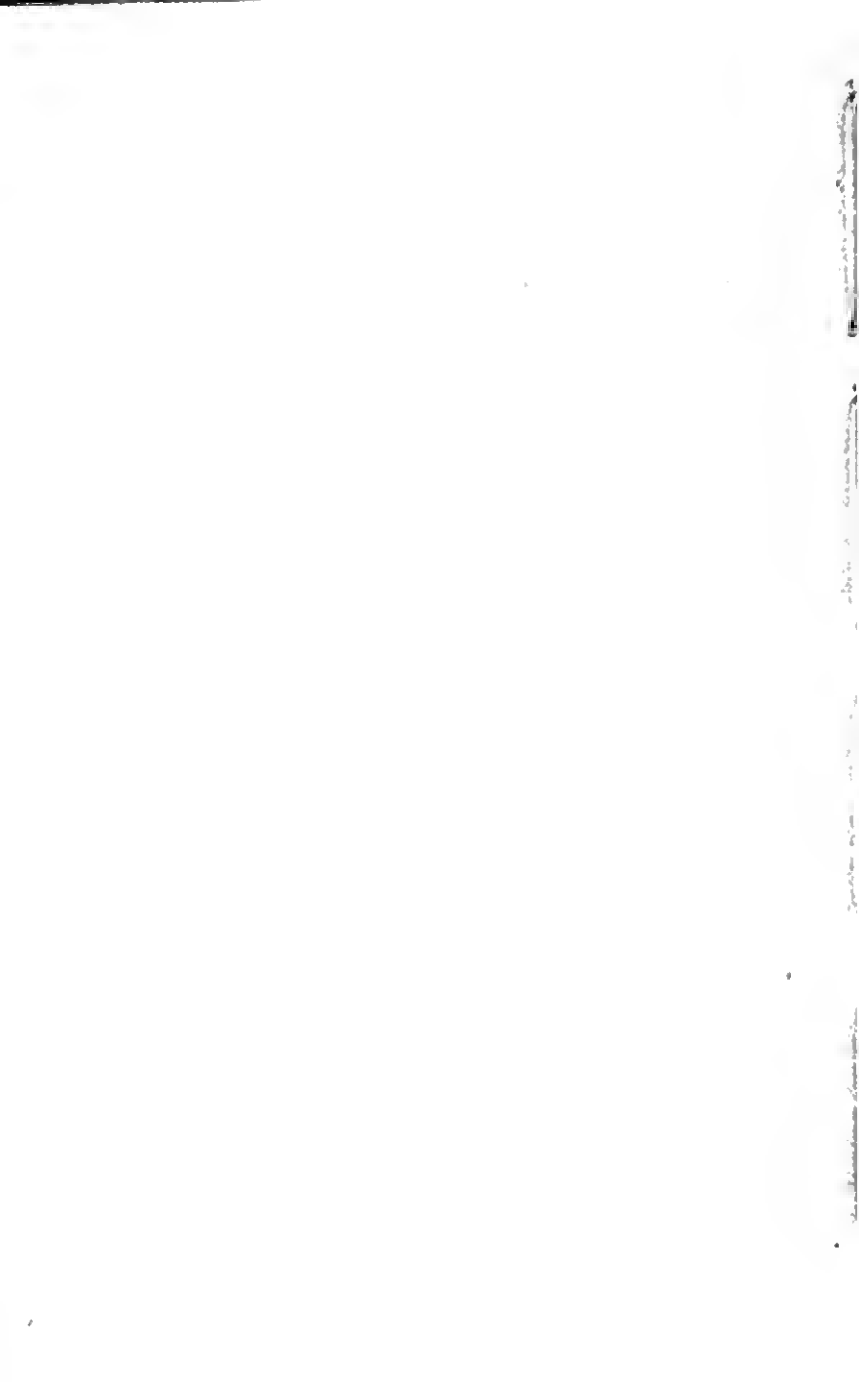
Mankind is hungry, but the feast is there, though it is locked up and hidden away. It is the aim of this Series to put it within reach, so that, like the heroes of Homer, we may stretch out our hands to the good cheer laid before us.

No doubt the great religions differ in fundamental respects. But they are not nearly so far from one another as they seem. We think they are further off than they are largely because we so often misunderstand and misrepresent them. Those

whose own religion is dogmatic have often been as ready to learn from other teachings as those who are liberals in religion. Above all there is an enormous amount of common ground in the great religions, concerning too the most fundamental matters. There is frequent agreement on the Divine Nature ; God is the One, Self-Subsisting Reality, knowing Himself, and therefore loving and rejoicing in Himself. Nature and finite spirits are in some way subordinate kinds of Being, or merely appearances of the Divine, the One. The Way of man's approach or return to God is in essence the same, in Christian and in non-Christian teaching. It has three stages : an ethical stage, then one of knowledge and love, leading to the mystical Union of the soul with God. Each stage will be illustrated in these volumes.

Something of all this may (it is hoped) be learnt from these books and pictures in this Series. Read and pondered with a desire to learn, they will help men and women to find " fullness of life," and peoples to live together in greater understanding and harmony. To-day the earth is beautiful, but men are disillusioned and afraid. But there will come a day, perhaps not a distant day, when there will be a Renaissance of man's spirit : when men will be innocent and happy amid the beauty of the world. For their eyes will be opened to see that egoism and strife are folly, that the Universe is Spiritual, and that men are the sons of God.

They shall not hurt or destroy  
In all my holy mountain :  
For all the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the  
Lord  
As the waters cover the sea.



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## INTRODUCTION

"THERE are", says Dr. Johnson, "two objects of curiosity—the Christian world, and the Mahometan world : all the rest may be considered as barbarous".

That such is the case, most persons, probably, will admit. Then why is the *Kur-án* so much neglected in this country, while we possess a translation of it in our own language, celebrated for its great accuracy, and enriched with an abundance of learned and curious notes? To this it may be answered :—

First, the arrangement of its contents perplexes and fatigues the most patient of readers by a real or apparent want of connexion.—Secondly, the book abounds with passages unintelligible without explanations which are not given in Sale's version.—Thirdly, to a large class of readers it is a book absolutely prohibited; for, being a code of ritual, moral, civil, and criminal law, as well as a rule of faith, it is unfit for the perusal of a modest female who does not regard it as the word of God.

I make no apology for introducing this selection of translated passages from the Koran with the foregoing quotation, which constitutes the opening paragraphs of the preface of a little remembered early work by Edward William Lane, that splendid English Arabist who gave the world such diverse masterpieces as *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, *The Thousand and One Nights*, and *An Arabic-English Lexicon*. It happens that Lane's *Selections from the Kur-án* was published a little over a hundred years ago; to be exact, in 1843. It also happens that when I conceived the idea of writing a book in which I would try to make the study and understanding of the Koran easier for the general English reader, I drew up a sketch of topics and an arrangement of contents which agreed remarkably with the scheme devised by Lane, though it was only after making this preliminary survey that I laid Lane's book, with many others, on my worktable. I mention these small details because they seem to show how little further, relatively speaking, our Western appreciation of



the Koran has progressed in all these intervening years, despite the accumulation meanwhile of a weighty bibliography. Though the second of Lane's answers to his own questionnaire has long since become dated by the appearance of several successors to Sale's pioneer translation, first published in 1734, and his third observation is now merely an amusing commentary on a bygone age, his first point is undoubtedly still most pertinent, as all who have ever taken in hand a complete translation of the Koran will have discovered.

Lane's *Selections*, which was subsequently revised and enlarged by his nephew Stanley Lane-Poole, the great numismatist and historian, in 1879, certainly served a most valuable purpose in its time, and may still be read with profit as well as a rather austere pleasure. But the ordinary English reader who may entertain the whimsical notion of looking into the Koran, and applies for advice to his local library, will scarcely be directed to Lane's *Selections*, original or revised. The odds are very heavily on his (or, in these less delicate days, her) being recommended to sample E. H. Palmer's translation, conveniently republished in the *World's Classics*, or the version of the Rev. J. M. Rodwell in *Everyman's*. Should the applicant be of a more adventurous turn of mind, and think to ask for an English rendering made by a confessing Muslim, Marmaduke Pickthall's *Meaning of the Glorious Koran* may well be suggested, or alternatively one of the several versions made by Indian scholars. But I will hazard the conjecture that the broad impression will still be one of bewilderment, because of the bizarre arrangement of the material in the original Arabic. The uninitiated reader still needs a guide. He may try Lane's, if he wishes and can find it, and he will get much help from it; but Lane's *Selections*, for all its merits, was after all compiled when Koranic studies in Europe were still in their infancy; and it would be disgraceful if the pages which follow these initial remarks were not something of an advance on the old master.

Now let us take a different approach. I have already mentioned Marmaduke Pickthall's book, the first edition of which appeared in 1930, towards the end of his remarkable career. I knew Pickthall a little, and the little I knew of him I respected and loved. He was certainly a most earnest convert. "The aim of this work", he begins, "is to present to English readers what Muslims the world over hold to be

the meaning of the words of the Koran, and the nature of that Book, in not unworthy language and concisely, with a view to the requirements of English Muslims. It may be reasonably claimed that no Holy Scripture can be fairly presented by one who disbelieves its inspiration and its message ; and this is the first English translation of the Koran by an Englishman who is a Muslim. Some of the translations include commentation offensive to Muslims, and almost all employ a style of language which Muslims at once recognise as unworthy. The Koran cannot be translated. That is the belief of old-fashioned Sheykhs and the view of the present writer. The Book is here rendered almost literally, and every effort has been made to choose befitting language. But the result is not the Glorious Koran, that inimitable symphony, the very sounds of which move men to tears and ecstasy. It is only an attempt to present the meaning of the Koran—and peradventure something of the charm—in English ”.

These disingenuous sentences are built around a scaffolding of three main and very interesting ideas. The first proposition, or rather assertion, somewhat naively put forward as a “ reasonable claim ”, is that it takes a Muslim to translate the Koran honestly ; the crudity of this dogma is tempered, not very convincingly, with the rider that it is only one example of a universal rule ; as though the Old Testament, that Hebrew Bible, were not conscientiously and worthily rendered into English by scholars who professed and called themselves Christians ; to quote only one example to the contrary. It is a fanatical argument, unworthy of a serious enquirer ; it is an insulting argument, unjust to the integrity of not a few who have laboured honestly in the field of Koranic interpretation ; it is an invalid argument, and that on many counts, which I will abstain from enumerating here.

Pickthall's second main point is that the Koran is untranslatable. When he adds that “ this is the belief of old-fashioned Sheykhs ”, he allows himself a strange understatement. The theory, or rather the tenet, that the Koran cannot be translated is very ancient in Islam, and every orthodox Muslim assents to it, though it is not quite an article of faith. It is a large and interesting idea, with implications unsuspected at first sight ; I shall therefore return to it later.

Thirdly, Pickthall refers to the emotive quality of the

Koran, "the very sounds of which move men to tears and ecstasy". Here again he touches lightly on a most remarkable fact, and one little apprehended in the West; though to be sure Sale himself so long ago, though untravelled in Muslim countries, does not neglect the matter in his "Preliminary Discourse". "It is probable", he writes, "that the harmony of expression which the Arabs find in the *Korân* contributed not a little to make the early disciples relish the doctrine therein taught, and gave an efficacy to arguments which, had they been nakedly proposed, without this rhetorical dress, might not have so easily prevailed. Very extraordinary effects are related of the power of words well chosen and artfully placed, which are no less powerful either to ravish or amaze than music itself; wherefore as much has been ascribed by the best orators to this part of rhetoric as to any other. Such was the impression produced on the minds of his audience by Mohammed's recitations of the *Korân*, that several of his opponents thought it the effect of enchantment". It would be possible to quote various instances of this phenomenon, which deserves investigation. But I will content myself for the moment with the voice of Dr. J.-C. Mardrus, whose chief title to fame is that he translated the *Arabian Nights* into twelve volumes of unexpurgated French. This did not keep his hands off the Koran, of which he published a volume of translated chapters in 1926. "Quant au style du Koran", says this authority on erotic literature, "il est le style personnel d'Allah. Comme le style est l'essence de l'être, il ne saurait être ici que divin. Et, de fait, les écrivains même les plus sceptiques, en ont subi la fascination. Son emprise est encore telle sur les trois cent millions de musulmans du globe, que les missionnaires étrangers s'accordent à reconnaître qu'on n'a guère pu produire jusqu'aujourd'hui un seul cas avéré d'apostasie musulmane. Tant il est vrai que le verbe bien conduit est la seule vraie magie". Even the appalling banality of these remarks does not diminish the validity of their more serious substance.

To illustrate a third type of approach, after Lane and Pickthall let us call D. S. Margoliouth, that eminent polymath, into the witness-box. "The Koran admittedly occupies an important position among the great religious books of the world", he begins, in introducing Rodwell's version to Everyman. "Though the youngest of the epoch-making

works belonging to this class of literature, it yields to hardly any in the wonderful effect which it has produced on large masses of men. It has created an all but new phase of human thought and a fresh type of character. It first transformed a number of heterogeneous desert tribes of the Arabian peninsula into a nation of heroes, and then proceeded to create the vast politico-religious organisations of the Muhammedan world which are one of the great forces with which Europe and the East have to reckon to-day". These words were written in 1909, before two great wars shifted the balance of power in the world, and incidentally broke up the Ottoman empire into a number of now independent Muslim succession-states ; before the emergence of Pakistan and the Indonesian Republic ; they are words even truer to-day than forty years ago. Margoliouth, who accepted the view that Mohammed the Arabian prophet, and not any divine agency, was the author of the Koran, proceeded to develop further this unremarkable idea, intolerable to the Muslim. "The secret of the power exercised by the book, of course, lay in the mind which produced it. It was, in fact, at first not a book, but a strong living voice, a kind of wild authoritative proclamation, a series of admonitions, promises, threats, and instructions addressed to turbulent and largely hostile assemblies of untutored Arabs. As a book it was published after the prophet's death. In Muhammed's life-time there were only disjointed notes, speeches, and the retentive memories of those who listened to them. To speak of the Koran is, therefore, practically the same as speaking of Muhammed, and in trying to appraise the religious value of the book one is at the same time attempting to form an opinion of the prophet himself. It would indeed be difficult to find another case in which there is such a complete identity between the literary work and the mind of the man who produced it".

This, in brief, is the contention that Mohammed consciously composed the elements collected by his followers and issued them as a deliberate fraud ; though Margoliouth conceded that "there is a growing opinion among students of religious history that Muhammed may in a real sense be regarded as a prophet of certain truths, though by no means of truth in the absolute meaning of the term". Even this sop to open-mindedness, however, is not allowed to pass without further qualification. "The method followed by Muhammed in the

promulgation of the Koran also requires to be treated with discrimination. From the first flash of prophetic inspiration which is clearly discernible in the earlier portions of the book he, later on, frequently descended to deliberate invention and artful rhetoric. He, in fact, accommodated his moral sense to the circumstances in which the rôle he had to play involved him". It is unnecessary to quote further from Everyman's introduction; enough has been reproduced to explain why Pickthall should have animadverted on "commentation offensive to Muslims".

Margoliouth's successor in the Laudian Chair of Arabic at Oxford, Professor H. A. R. Gibb, also takes the view that Mohammed was the author of the Koran. "In the earliest period of his preaching", he writes in his *Mohammedanism*, published in 1949, "Mohammed's utterances were delivered in a nervous oracular style cast into short rhymed phrases, often obscure and sometimes preceded by one or more formal oaths. This style is admittedly that of the ancient *kāhins* or Arabian oracle-mongers, and it is not surprising that Mohammed's opponents should have charged him with being just another such *kāhin*. For this and other reasons his style gradually loosened out into a simpler but still rhetorical prose; and as social denunciations and eschatological visions passed into historical narrative, and that in turn at Medina into legislation and topical addresses, little was left of its original stylistic features but a loose rhyme or assonance marking the end of each verse, now anything from ten to sixty words long. Carlyle's dictum on the Koran: 'It is as toilsome reading as I ever undertook, a wearisome, confused jumble, crude, incondite. Nothing but a sense of duty could carry any European through the Koran' puts succinctly what must indeed be the first impression of any reader. But years of close study confirm his further judgment that in it 'there is a merit quite other than the literary one. If a book comes from the heart, it will contrive to reach other hearts; all art and authorcraft are of small account to that'. Though to be sure, the question of literary merit is one not to be judged on *a priori* grounds but in relation to the genius of the Arabic language; and no man in fifteen hundred years has ever played on that deep-toned instrument with such power, such boldness, and such range of emotional effect as Mohammed did".

Carlyle's stricture, which has been echoed in varying degrees

of acerbity by many, is a sufficiently serious charge ; but I hope in the course of these pages to demonstrate, so far as demonstration is possible, that it is a judgment upon not the Koran itself, but the inadequate renderings which have been widely canvassed as faithful translations. There is the additional difficulty, touched on by Lane as already quoted, and felt by all. "The preposterous arrangement of the Koran", R. A. Nicholson remarked in his *Literary History of the Arabs*, "is mainly responsible for the opinion almost unanimously held by European readers that it is obscure, tiresome, uninteresting ; a farrago of long-winded narratives and prosaic exhortations, quite unworthy to be named in the same breath with the Prophetical Books of the Old Testament. One may, indeed, peruse the greater part of the volume, beginning with the first chapter, and find but a few passages of genuine enthusiasm to relieve the prevailing dullness".

Finally, to round off this brief anthology of Western comment, here is a striking paragraph from R. Blachère, the most recent French interpreter of the Koran, whose first volume of three was published at Paris in 1947. "Pour un Occidental plus ou moins imprégné de culture gréco-latine et d'influences judéo-chrétiennes, il est difficile de se représenter l'enthousiasme soulevé par la prédication coranique. À quoi était due l'émotion esthétique provoquée, chez les fidèles, par ces thèmes de prédication, ces admonestations, ces peintures du Jugement Dernier, ces légendes édifiantes dont beaucoup, pour certains, n'offraient plus l'attrait de la nouveauté ? Cette émotion, cet 'état poétique', comme dirait Valéry, comment les expliquer sinon par la qualité intrinsèque du verbe coranique ? Même l'auditeur européen ignorant l'arabe est sensible à la récitation de certaines sourates. Que penser des contemporains de Mahomet, tout au moins de ceux que n'aveuglait point la haine ?"

"The Glorious Koran, that inimitable symphony, the very sounds of which move men to tears and ecstasy". "As toilsome reading as I ever undertook, a wearisome, confused jumble, crude, incondite. Nothing but a sense of duty could carry any European through the Koran". How is one to reconcile the verdict of believing Pickthall with that of infidel but not unsympathetic Carlyle ? Such, in very brief, is the task which I have set myself in this book ; and it is obviously no easy task.

It is best to make a fresh beginning ; to attempt a summary account of the history and contents of the Koran ; and then one by one to take up the various pieces which constitute the puzzle, and to see what sort of a picture emerges. The first part of the enquiry is a mere reproduction of generally agreed facts, which can be studied in greater detail in several of the books listed in the bibliography which rounds off this volume.

The Koran as it comes to the modern reader in the original Arabic, and in the great majority of translations, is a book of comparatively modest size—just 500 pages in the Everyman edition of Rodwell's version—consisting of 114 chapters called Suras of extremely variable length ; these chapters are divided into verses, and the verses are usually numbered. The first outward appearance is therefore calculated to persuade the reader that he has in hand a book regularly composed and methodically ordered, something like the Old Testament, only not so long. This arrangement however dates not from the Prophet's lifetime, but is due to a recension undertaken at the order of Othman, the third caliph of Islam, in the year 651 A.D., nearly twenty years after Mohammed's death. Othman's predecessor Abu Bakr, the first caliph, is reported to have commissioned a similar enterprise in 633 A.D., and the Arab historians speak of his collection being made "from bits of parchment, thin white stones, leafless palm-branches, and the bosoms of men". This earliest edition, and several others made by various immediate disciples and relatives of the Prophet, perished when Othman's Vulgate was propagated ; though modern researchers claim to have recovered considerable information about the contents of the lost codices. In the Vulgate the general procedure is to arrange the Suras roughly in order of their length, beginning with the longest and ending with the shortest, a favourite prayer of the Prophet's being prefixed. This arrangement paid no heed to the chronology of the revelations. It is generally accepted, even by early Muslim writers, that some of the Suras are composite and include materials communicated by Mohammed at widely varying times. Attempts have been made by modern European scholars, following the notable lead of Theodor Nöldeke, to reconstruct the original order in which the different revelations were received. Some translations reflect the results of these researches, concerning which unanimity has by no means been reached. Rodwell's

version is a conservative and comparatively cautious adaptation of Nöldeke's theories ; the translation of Richard Bell takes the whole book to pieces section by section and verse by verse, and seeks to put it together again ; R. Blachère has done almost the same thing, though not so drastically.

It has long been debated whether Mohammed was able to read and write, and if so, whether he himself inscribed any part of the revelations which make up the Koran. If he was in fact able to write, and the balance of probabilities now seems to incline towards a positive answer to this obscure question, the orthography available to him would have differed considerably from that in which Arabic came to be written later on ; he would have lacked the devices subsequently invented to indicate the short vowels, and to distinguish from each other certain letters of identical shape. But the catastrophic confusion which might have been supposed reasonably enough to result from these circumstances was actually almost completely avoided by the remarkable and exceedingly important fact that the principal and, as many Arab scholars would contend, more reliable method of transmitting the sacred text in those remote times was by word of mouth. The Arabs were already long accustomed to hand on their profane literature, the poetry of desert and town, by memory, and we know that many of their most esteemed ancient poets were what is nowadays mis-called illiterate. Having no laborious penmanship to intervene between the original composition and its ever-widening audience, it was felt that the authentic text had an excellent chance of being preserved intact and unadulterated ; the scribe could slip, by defect of eye and hand ; the talented and conscientious rhapsode would not err. The spoken word did not have to depend upon a defective orthography for its accurate transmission. It is extremely likely, if not certain, that all the revelations received by Mohammed were spoken by him in the first instance, and wholly remembered by his immediate disciples. Their memories were at Othman's disposal when the Vulgate came to be established, and they were unquestioningly felt to be reliable. Variants certainly existed, and have been preserved in considerable numbers ; but these are in large part comparatively unimportant, and rarely affect to a dramatic degree the meaning of the received text.



The earliest revelation, according to the consensus of Muslim authorities, was the short piece entitled "The First Call" in the present selection ; this was a simple command to Mohammed, received under conditions very like what is called trance, to "recite" the divine message to be entrusted to him. (The literal meaning of Koran is "recitation".) After an interval of silence the Prophet was summoned a second time, in similar circumstances, and the nature of his commission was slightly more defined. Thereafter the revelations succeeded each other at regular intervals, and continued through all the vicissitudes of his heroic career until almost the end of his life ; the last, or very nearly the last, was the brief "Victory". As indicated in some of the quotations reproduced above, the contents of these messages to mankind ranged from earnest exhortation to flee the wrath to come, through narrations of the careers of former prophets, to religious and legal prescriptions for the organisation of the believer's life and the society of the faithful. The selection contained in this volume is representative of the first two of these three classes, but leaves aside the third.

I now turn to a preliminary discussion of the literary style of the Koran, "*le style personnel d'Allah*" in Mardrus' unparalleled parlance ; but to the Muslim this is a serious and sacred matter, for Islamic orthodoxy believes the Koran to be literally the Speech of God, eternal and uncreated, committed in Arabic to Mohammed by the archangel Gabriel.

It has been frequently observed by European scholars that there is a marked change, and it is implied that this change is a deterioration, in the style of the later revelations as compared with that of the earlier Suras. The parts of the Book received by the Prophet during the first years of his apostleship are characterised by short sentences with frequent rhymes, the occurrence of strange oaths and mysterious words, and a general atmosphere of tension and the supernatural. Attention has been called to the rhythmical nature of these utterances ; and it has been suggested that the productions of Mohammed's later life are less emotional and correspondingly less emotive. When the rhythms of the Koran have been analysed, they have been analysed quantitatively, following the rules for scanning Arabic poetry. Now I propose that, although this quantitative analysis is certainly most pertinent, it does not give by any means a complete picture of the situation, and that the element

of stress also played an important part in heightening the excitement of the discourse. It is hazardous to press this point too far, because we know very little for certain about how Arabic was enunciated so long ago, and can in the main only conjecture from modern practice, which however varies considerably from region to region. It may be that the dramatic quality of these utterances was greatly augmented by the conflict between quantitative and accentual stress. With all necessary reservations let us look at some specimen passages in transliteration.

Here is the original of "The Clatterer", Sura CI, which is considered to be one of the earliest revelations:

al-qāri'atu mā l-qāri'atu  
 wa-mā adrāka mā l-qāri'atu  
 yauma yakūnu n-nāsu ka-l-farāshi l-mabthūthi  
 wa-takūnu l-jibālu ka-l-'ihni l-manfūshi  
 fa-ammā man thaqulat mawāzīnuhu fa-huwa fī 'ishatin  
 rādiyyatin  
 wa-ammā man khaffat mawāzīnuhu fa-ummuhu hāwiyatun  
 wa-mā adrāka mā hiyah  
 nārun hāmiyatun

That is the exact equivalence of the written Arabic, as nearly as the standard English system of representation allows it to be shown. But the written form obviously differs from the spoken form, since we know from current practice, and this is confirmed by the rhyming implications, that certain grammatical endings are to be apocopated. The first reconstruction, following this indication, is something as follows:

al-qāri'a : mā l-qāri'a  
 wa-mā adrāk : mā l-qāri'a  
 yauma yakūnu n-nās : ka-l-farāshi l-mabthūth  
 wa-takūnu l-jibāl : ka-l-'ihni l-manfūsh  
 fa-ammā man thaqulat mawāzīnuh : fahwa fī 'ishatin rādiyya  
 wa-ammā man khaffat mawāzīnuh : fa-ummuhu hāwiya  
 wa-mā adrāk : mā hiya  
 nārun hāmiya

Marking the quantitatively long syllable O, and the short syllable o, we get this pattern of rhythm:

○ ○ ○ ○ : ○ ○ ○ ○  
 ○ ○ ○ ○ : ○ ○ ○ ○  
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ : ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ : ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ : ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ : ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
 ○ ○ ○ ○ : ○ ○ ○ ○  
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

If the attempt is made to reconstruct the pattern by stress rather than quantity, the result may be somewhat like this:

○ ○ ○ ○ : ○ ○ ○ ○  
 ○ ○ ○ ○ : ○ ○ ○ ○  
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ : ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ : ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ : ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ : ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
 ○ ○ ○ ○ : ○ ○ ○ ○  
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

This scheme permits us to realise that the rhythmical elements predominating in this sound pattern are the two simple phrases (o) ○ ○ and ○ ○ ○, the second being varied in lines 3 and 4 by ○ ○ ○.

Let us now go forward to the final revelation "Victory", Sura CX.

idhā jā'a naşru llāhi wa-l-fatḥu  
 wa-ra'aita n-nāsa yadkhulūna fī dīni llāhi afwājan  
 fa-sabbiḥ bi-ḥamdi rabbika wa-staghfirhu innahu kāna  
 tauwāban

The quantitative pattern, allowing for apocopation, is thus:

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ : ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ : ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ : ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Substituting stress for rhythm, we achieve a rather different result:

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ : ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ : ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ : ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Again we see the elements to be (o) ○ ○ and ○ ○ ○.

A third typical specimen would be the "Opening Prayer",  
Sura I:

al-ḥamdu lillāhi rabbi l-‘ālamīna  
r-raḥmāni r-raḥīmi  
māliki yaumi d-dīni  
īyāka na‘budu wa-īyāka nasta‘īnu  
ihdinā ṣ-ṣirāṭa l-mustaqīma  
ṣirāṭa l-ladhinna an‘amta ‘alaihim  
ghairi l-maghdūbi ‘alaihim wa-lā d-dāllīna

The apocopated quantitative analysis is as follows:

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ : ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ : ○ ○ ○ ○

The stress pattern is considerably different:

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ : ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ : ○ ○ ○ ○

The foregoing specimens are all taken from short Suras of a lyrical character. Now let us look at a characteristic passage from one of the later revelations, which have been felt by European critics to be prosaic and uninspired. How does rhythm on the quantitative and stress basis work out with a section of legislation, as for instance Sura II 228-229, where the subject-matter is divorce?

wa-l-muṭallaqātu yatarabbaṣna bi-anfusihinna thalāthata qurū'in wa-lā yaḥillu lahunna an yaktumna mā khalaqa llāhu fī arḥāmihinna in kunna yu'minna bi-llāhi wa-l-yaumi l-ākhirī wa-bu'ūlatuhunna aḥaqqu bi-raddihinna fī dhālika in arādū iṣlāhan wa-la-hunna mithlu l-ladhi 'alaihinna bi-l-ma'rūfi wa-lir-rijālī 'alaihinna darajatun wa-llāhu 'azīzun ḥakimun

at-ṭalāqu marratāni fa-imsākun bi-ma'rūfin au tasrīhun  
bi-ihsānin wa-lā yaḥillu lakum an ta'khudhū mim mā  
ātaikumuhunna shai'an illā an yakḥafā allā yuqīmā ḥudūda  
llāhi fa-in khiftum allā yuqīmā ḥudūda llāhi fa-lā junāha  
'alaihimā fīmā ftadat bihi tilka ḥudūdu llāhi fa-lā ta'tadūhā  
wa-man yata'adda ḥudūda llāhi fa-ūlā'ika humu z-zālimūna

**First the quantitative pattern :**

**Secondly the stress pattern :**

[illegible]

It appears from the above analysis that the basic elements are always the iambic and the daetyl, with an occasional anapaest; the tension is however relaxed in the legislative passage by a greater frequency of arhythmic unstressed syllables. That is as far as we will take it in this context; the subject has hardly been touched as yet, and a very careful and systematic examination of the text of the Koran will be necessary before any firm conclusions can be reached. It is interesting to think of these rhythms in terms of drumming, and it might be profitable to consider how far the excitative properties of the Koran correspond with emotional effects of drum-rhythms.

It is now appropriate to say something on the second rhetorical peculiarity of the original, namely the rhyme-endings which run through the text like a bright ribbon, gathering together the scattered discourse. Rhyme and assonance are characteristic of oracular utterances, and not only in Arabic; they are also a distinguishing feature of proverb and oratory, and not only in Arabic. The original intention seems to be twofold: to impress the hearer with a sense of finality and inevitability, and to render the phraseology more memorable. "A stitch in time saves nine" we say, using an assonance very like that found so frequently in the Koran. This is not poetry, but it gratifies that urgent instinct for sound repetition which lies at the roots of rhymed verse; only the looseness of the rhythms prevents it from being definable as poetry in its own old-fashioned right. It was not without good cause that Mohammed protested vigorously against the accusation of being a poet; quite apart from his natural horror at the suggestion that he himself was the author of the message which he sincerely believed to be divine, he would realise like any true Arab the further insulting implication that he was a bad poet, because judged as poetry his utterances broke all the rules of metre and form.

From mechanics we turn to appreciation. Carlyle's disgust with the Koran is so dramatically at variance with Pickthall's enchantment, and Pickthall's enchantment is so typical of the experience of countless millions of believers down the centuries, that we need to search somewhat carefully for an adequate explanation of this varied reception of one and the same book. Let it be allowed that faith moves mountains, and that unbelief chills ardour; when this is admitted and discounted, there can hardly be any other book in the literature of mankind about the merits of which such completely divergent opinions have been so earnestly and responsibly expressed.

Bad translation is not the whole of the story by any means. In fact the Koran has not been unlucky in its English translators; Sale and Palmer were talented writers. It cannot be said that Pickthall's version, for all that it was the work of a Muslim and had the blessing of the Azhar, is any superior as reading matter; even Rodwell's rendering is, to my taste at all events, more tolerable. No; the fault lies not so much in the manner of translation, as in the manner of reading the translation. The root of the trouble is that the ordinary

reader, and for that matter the extraordinary reader as well, has not been sufficiently advised how to read the Koran.

In the first place, the Western reader must get rid of the assumption that the Koran is more or less like the Old Testament. The misapprehension is natural enough, when the first casual glance picks out the names of Adam, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Jonah, Joseph, Job ; the "Biblical" style of the popular translations does not furnish exactly a corrective. Misled by these early impressions, the reader makes the fatal mistake of trying to take in too much at once ; he opens at a likely place, the beginning of a Sura, and is lulled into unsuspicion by the familiar lay-out of chapter and verse ; he finishes his first Sura, and goes on to several more ; he is bewildered by the rapid and seemingly illogical changes of subject, and he quickly wearies of the frequent repetitions of themes and formulas ; he misses the homely straightforwardness of *Kings* or *Samuel*, the sustained eloquence of *Psalms* or *Isaiah*. Having no clue to the Koran's own excellences, he compares it unfavourably with what he has known since childhood, and is now ready to concur with Carlyle.

The Koran, like the poetry which it resembles in so many ways, is best sampled a little at a time ; and that little deserves and needs meditation. If the reader is ambitious to peruse the whole, and will not be satisfied by the part such as the present selections offer, he will do well to make his first essay with Rodwell, whose chronological rearrangement, though not perfect, gives a fair enough idea of the order in which the revelations were received by Mohammed. After the earliest hesitating half-coherencies, he will progress through the apocalyptic visions of the Dics Irac. He will become gradually familiar with the Koran's claim to be a confirmation of earlier Scriptures. He will observe how the Koran assumes a knowledge of the contents of those Scriptures, and only later expands the individual narratives into something like connected stories. He now follows step by step the gradual unfolding of the full prophetic powers ; and when he comes to the polemic and the legislation he is readier to receive and understand them.

He will not suppose, having persevered to read the book from end to end, that he now knows it, in the sense that a Muslim knows it, or that his appreciation and comprehension

of it resemble in the least the appreciation and comprehension of the faithful. He should be stopped from such a presumption by reflecting that the good Muslim has committed the whole Koran to memory during his early years, and that whereas he, the unbeliever, reads the text, the believer does not need to read it, having it securely in his heart. He, the uninitiated enquirer, however strenuous and sincere his purpose, will always be denied participation in the believer's joy, because he is screened from it by the double veil of a printed page and a foreign idiom. Yes, a foreign idiom; for the Koran is God's revelation in Arabic, and the emotive and evocative qualities of the original disappear almost totally in the skilfullest translation. To the Muslim the Koran is what Mohammed felt it to be, and orthodoxy has always maintained it is, one whole and indivisible divine book, equal in all its parts, its parts being equal to its whole, an eternal Arabic expression of God's final message to mankind.

When appreciation rests upon these foundations, the charges of wearisome repetition and jumbled confusion become meaningless. Truth cannot be dimmed by being frequently stated, but only gains in clarity and convincingness at every repetition; and where all is true, inconsequence and incomprehensibility are not felt to arise. To use a false analogy, but one which approaches nearer to reality than the canons Carlyle and those of his way of thinking are pleased to employ, one has as much and as little cause to scold the entire race of painters when, being in a great picture gallery, one finds oneself surrounded by dozens of representations of the Madonna and Child, and dozens of representations of the Annunciation, the Temptation, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection; one has as much and as little cause to dismiss the whole exhibition as "a wearisome, confused jumble, crude, ineon-dite". So might a savage speak, in his ignorant inappreciation of the masterpieces of Michelangelo and Raphael and Titian; so did a savage write, in his impatient misunderstanding of the Koran.

It is ancient Muslim doctrine that the Koran is untranslatable. That is in a sense a corollary of the proposition, even older, that the Koran is an inimitable miracle. The Koran in many passages challenges its disbelieving critics to "produce any other Sura the like of it"; the challenge was taken up during Mohammed's lifetime, and the surviving specimens of



emulation do nothing to undermine the Koran's claim to inimitability ; neither do the crude parodies put out by later writers, among them eminent authors, who feigned to rival the unique beauty of the Muslim Scriptures. If Arabic could and can never again be spoken as it was spoken in the Koran, certainly the Arabic of the Koran defies adequate translation.

Of course it is true in a general sense that nothing can be adequately translated from one language into another, if it possesses the slightest artistic merit and emotional appeal. How frequently one has read even a paragraph in a French newspaper, an ironic, half-amusing comment upon a passing event, and realised how utterly impossible it would be to communicate the flavour of those bantering remarks to another not familiar with French ! Having spent many years in studying the problems of translation, I know all too well that, within my own experience, no piece of fine writing has ever been done full justice to in any translation. The Koran undeniably abounds in fine writing ; it has its own extremely individual qualities ; the language is highly idiomatic, yet for the most part delusively simple ; the rhythms and rhymes are inseparable features of its impressive eloquence, and these are indeed inimitable. R. A. Nicholson was as experienced a translator of Arabic as the English world has produced, and none would charge him with deficiency of literary appreciation ; yet see what he did when he tried to mimic the rhymes of the Koran, as in his version of Sura CI.

The Smiting ! What is the Smiting ?  
And how shalt thou be made to understand what is  
the Smiting ?  
The Day when Men shall be as flies scatterèd,  
And the Mountains shall be as shreds of wool tatterèd,  
One whose Scales are heavy, a pleasing life he shall  
spend,  
But one whose Scales are light, to the Abyss he shall  
descend.  
What that is, how shalt thou be made to comprehend ?  
Scorching Fire without end !

Burton of the *Arabian Nights* was scarcely more successful in his rendering of Sura I.

In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate !  
Praise be to Allah, who the three worlds made,  
The Merciful, the Compassionate,  
The King of the day of Fate.  
Thee alone do we worship, and of thee alone do we  
ask aid.

Guide us to the path that is straight—  
The path of those to whom thy love is great,  
Not those on whom is hate,  
Nor they that deviate.                      Amen.

I do not think if the Koran had spoken like that, it would have shaken the world.

In making the present selection I have planned the material under a number of heads. I begin with Sura I, "The Opening Prayer", not because it is by any means among the earliest revelations ; but it stands first in the Koran, despite its brevity, and it is recited at the beginning of all public ceremonies and private occasions in the Islamic world ; it therefore seems to me most suitable for opening the selection.

The first section represents the Koranic teaching on God ; His unity, His attributes, and the evidences of His existence to be seen in nature. In making the translations I have endeavoured to indicate something of the rhythmic qualities of the original, and also, by varying the indentation of the lines, to suggest the patterns of thought and expression. Though aware that there is a considerable subjective element about this interpretation, I feel confident to have demonstrated, in some instances for the first time, something of the artistry of the Koranic rhetoric, and to have sketched the broad lines on which a fuller investigation could be conducted. This section terminates with "The Creation of Man", in which the reader has his first taste of Koranic narrative. "The Bounties of God", Sura LV, introduces him to the refrain, a feature not infrequently found in the Koran.

The second group collects together some of the personal experiences of the Prophet, and offers fine examples of rhetorical artistry. "The Clatterer", Sura CI, introduces a selection of the eschatological Suras, the most moving and dramatic of the entire book, whose shattering impact upon their auditors has been testified to in many a story. It is in this series that we find the greatest number of strange or

ambiguous words, whose elucidation has exercised the commentators from earliest times, and given scope to the ingenuity of European interpreters. In dealing with such passages I have as always preferred to follow traditional Muslim opinion rather than modern infidel conjecture, my purpose in this book being to illustrate the meaning which the Koran holds for the faithful down the ages. Similarly, and for like reasons, I have chosen to present Suras as complete wholes, for example Sura LVI "The Terror", instead of reflecting European theory that sees them as patchwork compositions made up of fragments revealed at different times. Whatever the truth of this theory may be, and my personal view is that it has been much exaggerated, it is without significance when one seeks to understand how believers have been affected by the traditional text they hold in so high reverence.

The third and longest section comprises those parts, or rather a few of those parts of the Koran which recount the experiences of earlier prophets. Mohammed felt intensely his position as a member of the great company of God's chosen messengers, and was able to comprehend the whole history of God's business with man as being present and re-enacted simultaneously in his own life. When the Koran relates the story of Abraham or Moses or Joseph, the intention is not to tell a new tale but to recall familiar histories. This explains, what is otherwise puzzling to the European reader, why certain incidents only are mentioned, and others silently taken for granted; all is familiar, and all is recalled by the least passing reference to the part. We do well moreover to remind ourselves that the Koran was revealed at a time when the Greek and Roman civilisations were plainly dead, and Judaism and Christianity appeared to be defeated faiths. Thanks to the teaching of the Koran, the Arabs became the first people in history to be fully aware of the life and death of civilisations; the new dispensation, that was by definition nothing new but rather the restatement of what was always true, and only lost through human failing, by avoiding the fatal errors of the past, rebellion against the divine will and arrogant forgetfulness of man's place in the universe, would usher in a golden and incorruptible age of perfect attunement to God's purpose.

In making these translations I have experimented very freely with various possibilities of treatment, from literal

unemotional prose to different sorts of stress verse. Though I would willingly get away as far as possible from "Biblical" style, being aware of its inappropriateness especially when taken to excess, in actual fact the Arabic original, being Semitic speech like the Hebrew Testament, dictates to the translator to no small extent how he shall go to work ; and there is also no doubt that the English mind has during these centuries become so conditioned as to what constitutes the religious style, that one appears more eccentric in writing deliberately otherwise than by conceding at least a minimal obedience to tradition. It may be that, if the public interest provoked by this tentative essay should prove sufficiently encouraging, I would later attempt a complete translation of the Koran ; this being so, I make appeal to my readers to communicate to me freely and frankly their reactions to the different methods I have employed, as their advice would greatly assist the more ambitious project.

To scholars I would say this. I have not written this book for them ; and if they are shocked by my inattention to the Higher Criticism, they may be assured that I am not ignorant of the ingenious literature that has gathered around Koranic studies in the West ; only here I am trying to show what the Koran means to the unquestioning soul of the believer, not what it suggests to the clinical mind of the infidel. As for the faithful, I will not conceal from them, what they will not in any case imagine, that I am no Muslim, nor could ever be. Pickthall's definition would therefore exclude me from being a fair interpreter ; yet I have endeavoured to be fair, not only philologically but also imaginatively, by making the effort always to approach and apprehend these Scriptures as if I believed them to be divinely inspired, whatever that phrase may mean.

Whatever that phrase may mean ; for I do not doubt at all that the Koran was a supernatural production, in that it bears all the marks of being the discourse of exaltation. We know quite well how Mobammed spoke in his normal, everyday moods ; for his *obiter dicta* have been preserved in great abundance. It is simply untrue therefore to say, as Margoliouth said, that "it would be difficult to find another case in which there is such a complete identity between the literary work and the mind of the man who produced it". Accepting, as we have good reason to accept, the sayings of Mohammed

recorded in the books of Traditions as substantially authentic, and supposing, as Margoliouth supposed, that the Koran was Mohammed's conscious production, it would be more reasonable to say that it would be difficult to find another case in which the literary expression of a man differed so fundamentally from his ordinary speech. Mohammed certainly had moments when his controlled consciousness was submerged by that curious phenomenon called possession or inspiration ; in those moments he was as much an original genius, to use the undefining definition of creative activity commonly employed in discussing great artists, as was Shakespeare or Raphael or Bach. It is therefore only on this point that I find myself standing apart from the faithful ; that whereas the faithful claim the source of the Prophet's inspiration to be divine, and are naturally content to leave it at that, believing where they cannot prove, I confess myself unable to say what might have been its origin, in spite of the psychologists, and am equally content not to guess at it.

The faithful have delighted in all ages, until these days when penmanship is almost as neglected in the East as in the West, to transcribe the Koran as beautifully as they knew how. We cannot say for certain what kind of characters those were in which the sacred text was first committed to " bits of parchment, thin white stones, leafless palm-branches ", though near-contemporary monumental evidence gives us a fair idea. Our earliest copies of the Koran are all written in varieties of the stiff Kufic hand, gradually becoming more rounded and supple, which as an ornamental script beautifies the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and early Muslim coins. These extremely ancient documents, dating back to the end of the seventh century onwards, are in that primitive period always of vellum, and their width is greater than their height ; they are devoid of ornament, and rely for their splendour—and they are indeed splendid—upon the symmetry and majesty of the writing. As the eighth century wore on, so it seems, the first decoration began to creep in, taking the form of gold bands of illumination stretched between the end of one Sura and the beginning of the next. Thereafter various marginal ornaments were introduced, to mark the divisions of the Koran as presently devised ; the half, the third, the quarter, the fifth, the sixth, the eighth, the tenth, the twelfth, the thirtieth, the parts of the thirtieth ; every fifth verse, every tenth verse ;

and, within the written area itself, the end of every single verse. Meanwhile the Kufic script began to give way to the more fluent naskh ; the vowels, formerly marked by red dots above, in or under the bearing consonants, acquired other symbols ; and further orthographical devices were invented to facilitate recitation. As the panels between the Suras increase in complexity and refinement, it becomes usual to contain the whole codex between end papers in full illumination ; and the opening and closing pages of the text are brilliantly ornamented. Korans of breathtaking beauty are created by superb artists working for the glory of God and the satisfaction of wealthy and pious patrons ; the binders vie in skill with the penmen and the illuminators. It is a most moving experience to inspect a large collection of fine copies of the Koran, such as that assembled in the exhibition hall of the Egyptian National Library, or in Mr. Chester Beatty's private museum in Dublin, and to see how century after century the faithful in all parts of Islam devoted their skill and their substance to the fitting commemoration of God's Word.

This is the Book which to-day is accepted by nearly four hundred million human beings as containing the Creator's final message to mankind. Its influence on the course of history has obviously been immense, and will as obviously continue to be extremely great. The Koran was the prime inspiration of a religious movement which gave rise to a civilisation of wide extent, vast power, and profound vitality. The literatures and fine arts of all the Muslim peoples spring from this fountain-head ; the majestically flowing river is joined here and there by tributaries running into it from neighbouring civilisations, but it remains to this day the same river as that which welled up thirteen and a half centuries ago in the dry lands of Arabia. No man seeking to live in the same world as Islam, and to understand the affairs of Islam, can afford to regard lightly, or to judge ignorantly, the Book that is called the Koran. It is among the greatest monuments of mankind. It surely deserves and demands to be more widely known and better comprehended in the West. I hope and trust, in all humility, that this introduction and selection will contribute a little towards that end.

## TRANSLATIONS

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### THE OPENING PRAYER

In the name of God, the All-Compassionate, the Merciful.

To God belongs Praise, for He is the Lord of all Being,  
the All-Compassionate, the Merciful,  
the Ruler of the Day of Reckoning.

Thee only we serve ; to Thee alone we pray for succour.  
Guide us in the straight path,  
the path of those whom Thou hast blessed,  
not of those against whom Thou art wrathful, nor of  
them who are astray.

I

### THE UNITY OF GOD

SAY : He is God, One,  
God, the Everlasting Refuge,  
Who has not begotten, and has not been begotten,  
and equal to Him is not any one.

CXII

### GLORY TO GOD

Glory to God in the evening and the morning :  
Praise be to Him in the heavens and the earth,  
at night and through the noonday.  
He brings forth the living from the dead  
and brings forth the dead from the living  
and quickens the earth after it was dead :  
even so shall you be brought forth.

These are His Signs :  
that He created you of dust,  
then lo ! you are men, scattered through the earth.

These are His Signs :  
that He created for you, of your very selves,  
spouses, that you may find repose in them,  
and fashioned between you a love and a compassion—  
Surely there are Signs for a people who reflect.

These are His Signs :  
that He created the heavens and the earth,  
and the diversity of your tongues and colours—  
Surely there are Signs for all living beings.

These are His Signs :  
your sleeping night and day,  
and your questing after His bounty—  
Surely there are Signs for a people who hearken.

These are His Signs :  
that He shows you the lightning, for fear and hope,  
and sends down a rain out of heaven  
quickening therewith the earth after it was dead—  
Surely there are Signs for a people having reason.

These are His Signs :  
that heaven and earth at His bidding shall arise,  
and then, when He shall call you, once and suddenly  
out of the earth, behold ! you shall come forth.

To Him belongs every one in the heavens and earth :  
all stand suppliant before Him.

xxx 19-25



## GOD THE ONE

It is He who fashioned for you hearing, eyes and hearts  
    (but little do you give thanks),  
and it is He who scattered you through the earth  
    (and to Him shall you be mustered),  
and it is He who causes you to die, and to live,  
and to Him belongs the alternation of night and day :  
    will you not understand ?

(But no : they said the like of what the Ancients said.  
They said : " What ? When we are dead,  
    and become dust and bones,  
    shall we indeed be summoned up ?  
Why, we have already been promised this before,  
    we and our fathers :  
    this is nothing but the tales of the Ancients ".)

SAY : To whom does the earth belong, and all who dwell in it,  
    if you are so knowing ?

    They will say : To God.

SAY : Will you not then be mindful ?

SAY : Who is the Lord of the Seven Heavens,  
    and the Lord of the Mighty Throne ?

    They will say : They are God's.

SAY : Will you not then have awe of Him ?

SAY : In whose hand is the Kingdom of all things,  
    protecting He, Himself unprotected,  
    if you are so knowing ?

    They will say : It is God's.

SAY : Why then are you bewitched ?

(No indeed : We came to them with the Truth :  
    it is they who are liars.)

God has taken no son to Himself,  
    nor was there ever with Him any other god ;  
else every several god would have gone off with his creation,  
    and some would have risen superior to others.  
Glorious is God, far transcending what they describe,  
    having knowledge of the Unseen and the Visible,  
    far above what they associate with Him.

XXIII 80-94

## GOD HAS NO SON

SAY :

If the All-Compassionate indeed had a son,  
I would be the first of his worshippers.  
Glorious is the Lord of the heavens and the earth,  
the Lord of the Throne,  
far transcending what they describe.

(Leave them then to plunge and play  
until they shall meet their day,  
the day wherewith they were ever menaced.)

And it is He who in Heaven is God,  
and in Earth is God ;  
and He is the Wise, the All-Knowing.  
And Blessed is He to whom belongs  
the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth  
and all that lies between them.  
He likewise has knowledge of the Hour,  
and to Him shall you every one be returned.

XLIII 81-86

## THE GOD OF ALL

To Him belongs every one  
dwelling in the heavens and the earth,  
and likewise those who dwell in His presence  
not disdaining to worship Him  
neither growing weary,  
magnifying Him night and day  
without flagging.

Have they taken to themselves gods of the earth,  
able to raise up the dead ?  
(Had there been gods in heaven and earth other than God  
they would surely have fallen into corruption.)  
Glorious is God, the Lord of the Throne,  
far transcending what they describe.  
(For He shall not be questioned of what He does ;  
but they shall be questioned.)  
Or have they taken to themselves gods other than He ?

SAY :

Bring your proof ! This is the plain statement  
of those who are with me  
and those who were before me.  
(But the greater part of them know not the truth,  
and even now are turning away.)

We sent no Apostle before thee, but We revealed to him :  
No god is there but I : worship Me.  
(They also said : The All-Compassionate  
has taken to Himself a son.)  
Glorious is He ! Not so :  
with Him are but honoured servants  
who outrun Him not touching the Utterance,  
doing only that He commands.

XXI 19-27

## EVIDENCES OF GOD

Have you not seen how God is glorified  
by all who dwell in the heavens and earth,  
and the birds likewise as they spread their wings ?  
Every one of them, He knows of old  
his worship and his magnificat ;  
for God knows all that they do.  
To God belongs the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth,  
and to God is the returning.

Have you not seen how God drives on the clouds,  
then marshals them together,  
then turns them into masses ?  
So that you see the deluge issuing from the midst of them.  
And He sends down out of heaven hail from the mountains  
there,  
smiting with it whom He will,  
and turning it aside from whom He will :  
the flash of its lightning wellnigh snatches the sight.  
God turns about and about the night and the day :  
surely there is a lesson for those having eyes to see.

XXIV 41-44

## THE KEYS OF THE UNSEEN

In His hands are the keys of the Unseen ;  
none knows them but He ;  
and He knows all that is in the land and the sea.

Not a leaf falls, but He knows it ;  
not a grain in the shadows of the earth,  
nor anything green, or withered,  
except it is all in a clear writing.

It is He who takes you by night, and knows what you have  
wrought in the day,  
then raises you up therein, that a said term may be  
accomplished ;  
then to Him shall be your return ;  
then He shall inform you of all that you were doing.

He is the all-triumphant, ruling over His servants ;  
He sends over you guardians ;  
till, when death comes to any one of you, Our messengers  
take him, not failing ;  
then they are restored to God, their Master, the True.  
Belongs not the Judgment to Him, who is the swiftest of  
reckoners ?

SAY : Who shall deliver you from the shadows of the land and  
sea ?  
when you call upon Him humbly and secretly,  
“ If Thou deliverest us from these things, assuredly  
we shall be thankful.”

SAY : It is God who shall deliver you out of them, and out of  
every affliction.  
Yet still will you associate other gods with Him.

SAY : He indeed is able to send upon you punishment,  
from above you or from under your feet,  
or to make you to taste some of you the violence of  
others.

Behold how We dispose the Signs, that perchance they shall  
understand.

VI 59-66

## LIGHT OF THE WORLD

God is the Light of the heavens and the earth ;  
the likeness of His Light is as a niche  
wherein is a lamp  
    (the lamp in a glass,  
        the glass as it were a glittering star)  
kindled from a Blessed Tree,  
an Olive that is neither of the East nor of the West,  
whose oil wellnigh would shine, even if no fire touched it ;  
Light upon Light ;  
    (God guides to His Light whom He will.)  
    (And God sets out parables for men ;  
        God has knowledge of every thing.)  
in Temples God has allowed to be raised up, and His Name  
  commemorated therein ;  
therein glorifying Him, at dawn and dusk, are men  
whom neither commerce nor trafficking diverts from the  
  remembrance of God,  
and the due performance of worship,  
and the giving of alms,  
fearing a day when all hearts and eyes shall be turned about,  
that God may reward them for their most excellent works,  
and give them an increase out of His bounty.  
    (And God supplies whom He will, without reckoning.)

And as for the unbelievers,  
their deeds are as a mirage in a spacious plain,  
which the man athirst supposes to be water,  
but when he comes to it finds it nothing ;  
there indeed he finds God,  
and God reckons with him in full ;  
    (and God is swift to the reckoning.)  
Or they are as shadows on a dark sea  
covered by a billow  
    above which is a billow  
        above which are clouds ;  
        shadows piled one upon another ;  
when he puts forth his hand, scarcely can he see it.  
    (And on whomsoever God bestows no light, no light  
  whatever is his.)

XXIV 35-40

## HE SLUMBERS NOT NOR SLEEPS

GOD

no god is there

but HE, the Living, the Everlasting.

Slumber seizes Him not, nor sleep.

(To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and earth.)

Who is there that shall intercede with Him, save by His leave?

He knows what lies before them, and what is after them;

and they comprehend not anything of His knowledge,

except so much as He wills.

(His Throne comprises the heavens and the earth;

the preserving of them oppresses Him not.)

Sublime is HE, the Magnificent.

II 256

## THE FACE OF GOD

To God belongs the East, and the West :

wheresoever you turn yourselves, there is the Face of God.

(God is all-comprehending, all-knowing.)

Yet they said, God took to Himself a son.

Glory be to Him ! Rather to Him belongs all that is in the  
heavens and earth :

All stand suppliant before Him,

the Creator of the heavens and earth ;

and when He decrees a commandment, He does but say  
thereto

BE and it is.

II 109-111

## GOD THE CREATOR

Now if you ask them, Who created the heavens and earth ?  
certainly they will say, Created were they by the Mighty, the  
All-Knowing.

He fashioned for you the earth as a cradle,

and fashioned for you therein roads ;

perchance you will go the right way.

He sent down out of heaven a rain in due measure  
(and We have revived therewith a land that was dead) ;  
even so shall you be brought forth from the dust.

He created all creatures, male and female,  
and fashioned for you a ship, and camels,  
whereon you do ride,

that you might be seated balancing on their backs,  
and thereafter remember the goodness of your Lord  
when you are seated upon them, and say :

Glorious is He who subjected these to us, that we could not  
have attained to :  
truly unto our Lord shall we revert.

XLIII 8-13

## HEAVEN AND EARTH

Indeed We set out constellations in heaven,  
and fashioned them fair to those who gaze on them,  
and preserved them from every accursed demon :  
(except for those that give ear surreptitiously,  
and they are pursued by a visible flame).

And the earth We extended,  
and threw down therein firm mountains,  
and made every thing to sprout therein duly balanced ;  
(therein We set for you goodly sustenance,  
and for those for whom you provide not ;  
no thing is there whose treasures are not in Our keeping,  
and We send it not down on you save in known measure).

And We let forth the winds fully charged,  
and We sent down from heaven a rain  
whereof We gave you to drink ;  
(and you are not its treasurers ;  
it is We who give life, and We who deal death,  
and We are the sole inheritors).

xv 16-24

## THE PERFECT CREATION

Blessed is He in whose hand is the Kingdom,  
and He is powerful over every thing.

He created death and life, to prove you,  
which of you is better in works ;  
and He is the Mighty, the Pardoner.

He created the seven heavens laid one above the other :  
you see not, in the creation of the All-Compassionate,  
any unequalness.  
Look again now : do you see any crack ?

Look again, and again a second time :  
your sight will return to you, flagging and weary.

Indeed, We have adorned with lamps the lowest heaven,  
and set them out for stoning the demons ;  
and We have prepared for them the torment of the  
Blaze.

LXVII 1-5

## GOD'S GUIDANCE

SAY : Shall we call upon (other than God)  
that which shall profit and hurt us nothing,  
and we be turned back in our traces  
after that God has guided us ?  
So shall we be like to one whom the demons have  
hedeveloped,  
bewildered in the earth :  
companions he has, who call him to the guidance,  
" Come unto us !"  
SAY : God's guidance is the true guidance,  
and we are commanded to surrender to the Lord of  
the Worlds.



Perform the Prayer,  
and go in awe of Him :  
for unto Him you shall be mustered.

It is He who created the heavens and the earth  
in Truth,  
and the day He says BE and it is ;  
His saying is Truth, and His is the Kingdom  
the day that the Trump shall be blown ;  
who knows the Unseen and the Witness,  
and He is the Wise, the Aware.

VI 70-73

## SIGNS OF GOD

It is God who splits the grain and the date-stone,  
bringing forth the living from the dead :  
He brings forth too the dead from the living.  
That then is God : so how are you turned away from Him ?

He splits the skies into dawn,  
and has made night for a repose,  
and the sun and the moon to a reckoning.  
That is the ordaining of the Mighty, the All-Knowing.

It is He who appointed for you the stars,  
that by them you might be guided  
in the shadows of land and sea.  
Truly We have distinguished the Signs for a people having  
knowledge.

It is He who produced you from one living soul,  
and then a lodging-place,  
and after a repository.  
Truly We have distinguished the Signs for a people having  
understanding.



## THE BOUNTIES OF GOD

The All-Compassionate  
has taught the Recitation,  
created man,  
taught him the Exposition.

The sun and the moon to a reckoning,  
the plants and the trees prostrating,  
and the heaven, He lifted it up—  
(and He set the Balance :  
cheat not in the Balance,  
but weigh you with justice, and spoil not the Balance)  
and the earth, He laid it down for mankind,  
where are fruits, and palm-trees with secund spathes,  
and grain in its husk, and fragrant herbs :  
*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

He created man of a clay like the potter's,  
and created the demons of smokeless fire :  
*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

The Lord of East and East,  
and the Lord of West and West :  
*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

He let loose the two seas, that are met together,  
between them still a barrier they do not transgress—  
*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

bringing forth from them the pearl and the coral :  
*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

His too are the ships, raised up in the sea like mountains :  
*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

All that dwells upon the earth is perishing,  
yet abides the Face of your Lord, majestic, splendid :  
*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

They that dwell in the heavens and earth are ever imploring  
Him :  
every day He is engaged upon some labour—  
*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

be sure that We shall attend to you at leisure,  
you weight and you weight :

*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

O tribe of demons and of men, if ye are able  
to overpass the bounds of heaven and earth,  
overpass them ! Yet you shall not overpass  
except with an authority :

*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

Against you shall be launched  
a flame of fire, and molten brass,  
and you shall not be succoured :

*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

When Heaven shall be split,  
and turn crimson like red leather—

*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

upon that day shall none be asked about his sin,  
neither man nor demon :

*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

The sinners shall be known by the brands upon them,  
and they shall be seized by their forelocks and their feet :

*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

This is the Gehenna the sinners called a lie :

*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

Those and those shall turn about between it and a boiling  
water :

*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

But such as fear the Station of their Lord,  
for them shall be two gardens—

*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

abounding in branches—

*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

and in them two fountains of running water—

*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

and in them of every fruit two kinds :  
*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

Reclining upon couches lined with fine brocade,  
and the fruits of those gardens near to gather—  
*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

therein maidens of modest glances,  
untouched before them by any man or demon—  
*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

lovely as rubies, beautiful as coral :  
*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

Shall the reward of goodness be otherwise than goodness ?  
*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

And besides these shall be other twain gardens—  
*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

green, green pastures—  
*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

and in them two fountains of gushing water—  
*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

and in them fruits, and palms, and pomegranates :  
*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

Therein good and comely maidens—  
*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

houris cloistered in cool pavilions—  
*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

untouched before them by any man or demon—  
*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

reclining on green cushions and lovely druggets :  
*O which of your Lord's bounties will you and you deny ?*

Blessed be the Name  
of your Lord, majestic, splendid.

LV

## THE CREATION OF MAN

Surely We created man of a clay  
of mud moulded,  
and the jinns created We before  
of fire flaming.

And when your Lord said to the Angels :  
" See, I am creating a mortal of a clay  
of mud moulded.

When I shall have shaped him and breathed in him My  
spirit,  
fall you down and worship him !"  
Then did the Angels worship all together,  
all save Iblis ; he refused to be  
among those who worshipped.

And the Lord said : " Iblis, what ails you  
that you are not among those who worship ?"  
Iblis answered : " I would never worship  
a mere mortal that Thou hast created  
of a clay of mud moulded."

Then said the Lord : " Go you forth hence,  
for you are accursed ;  
on you shall lie the malediction  
till the Day of Judgment."

Iblis said : " O my Lord, grant me respite  
till the day when all shall be raised up ".  
The Lord answered : " So be it unto you ;  
respite is yours till the Day of the Known Time ".

Iblis said : " Lord, inasmuch as Thou hast beguiled me  
I shall make all earthly things comely in their eyes ;  
yea, I shall surely beguile them all together,  
save those servants that are Thine devoutly ".  
The Lord said : " This for me is a straight path ;  
over My servants you shall have no power  
save for them that follow you in error ".

xv 26-42

## THE FIRST CALL

RECITE : In the Name of thy Lord, who created—  
created Man of a clinging.

RECITE : and thy Lord is the Most Generous  
who taught by the Calamus,  
taught Man that he knew not.

XCVI 1-5

## THE SECOND CALL

O thou wrapped in a mantle,  
arise, and warn !  
And thy Lord magnify,  
and thy garments purify,  
and defilement flee.  
Give not, thinking to gain greater,  
and be patient unto thy Lord.

LXXIV 1-7

## THE CONFIRMATION

Did We not open thy breast  
and lift from thy back the burden,  
the burden that weighed thee down ?  
Did We not exalt thy name ?

Truly, with hardship comes ease,  
yea, with hardship comes ease.  
So, when thou art empty, labour,  
and let thy Lord be thy Quest.

XCIV

## THE CHARGE

Extol the Name of thy Lord, the Most High,  
 He who created and shaped,  
 He who decreed and directed,  
 He who brought forth the pasturage  
 and turned it a blackening wrack.

We shall make thee recite, to forget not  
 save what God shall desire :

He knows the seen and the hidden.

We shall ease thee unto the Easing.

Then preach, if the preaching be profitable,  
 and the fearful shall hear, and remember ;  
 but the most vile, they shall refuse it  
 and roast in the fiery furnace,  
 nor die therein, neither live there.

O happy they that are purified,  
 and remember their Lord's Name, and pray.

But you do prefer this present life ;  
 yet the other is better, more enduring.

Truly, this is all in the former scrolls,  
 the scrolls of Abraham and Moses.

LXXXVII

## THE COMFORTING

By the white Noonday  
 and the brooding Night !

Thy Lord has neither forsaken nor hates thee,  
 and the Last shall be better for thee than the First,  
 thy Lord shall give thee, and thou shalt be satisfied.

Did He not find thee an orphan, and shelter thee ?

Did He not find thee erring, and guide thee ?

Did He not find thee needy, and suffice thee ?

As for the orphan, do not oppress him ;  
 as for the beggar, scold him not from thee ;  
 as for thy Lord's bounty, declare it.

XCIII



## THE CONSOLATION

Truly We have given thee abundance ;  
then pray to thy Lord, and sacrifice.  
He that hates thee shall have no posterity.

CVIII

## THE DISOWNING

SAY :

O you who believe not,  
I will not worship what you worship :  
you worship not that I worship,  
nor worship I what you worshipped,  
nor worship you that I worship.  
To you your religion : to me my religion.

CIX

## THE REBUTTAL

Preach : for by thy Lord's bounty  
thou art neither soothsayer nor madman.

Will they say : " A poet ! We await for him fate's  
inconstancy ".

SAY : " Wait on ! I too shall be waiting along with you ".  
Is it their dreams command them to this ?  
or are they a froward people ?

Will they say : " He has forged it ! "

No : it is they who believe not.

Let them bring a discourse like to it,  
if they are true in their saying.

Were they created of nothing ?  
Or are they themselves the creators ?  
Did they create the heavens and earth ?  
No : it is they who lack faith.

Are thy Lord's treasures in their keeping ?  
Are they the guardians supreme ?  
Do they have a ladder, to climb and listen ?  
If any has listened, let him bring a clear mandate !

Does He have daughters,  
while you have sons ?

Dost thou ask them a wage,  
and they are weighed down with indebtedness ?  
Is the Unseen in their keeping,  
and are they writing it down ?  
Or are they seeking a trick ?  
But the infidels, they shall be tricked.  
Have they a god not God ?  
Exalted is God, beyond that they associate.

Did they see a strip of Heaven fall down,  
they would say, " 'Tis a lump of a cloud ! "

Leave them then till they meet their day,  
when they shall be struck by a thunderbolt,  
the day when their tricks will avail them nothing,  
and they shall not be succoured.  
Truly, those who do wrong shall be tormented beyond  
that ;  
but the most part of them know it not.

Endure the Decree of thy Lord  
(for thou art before Our eyes) ;  
and extol the praise of thy Lord  
when thou risest up  
and towards the night,  
and extol it when the stars are declining.

LII 29-49

## THE TWO VISIONS

By the star when it plunges !  
Your tribesman errs not, and neither strays,  
nor utters he out of caprice.

'Tis a revelation revealed to him,  
taught him by one mighty in power,  
rich in a wisdom, who stood poised  
(being upon the higher horizon)  
then drew near, and suspended hung  
two bows'-length away, or nearer,  
and revealed to his servant that he revealed.

His heart lied not of what he saw :  
what, will you dispute with him what he sees ?

Indeed, he saw him another time  
by the lote-tree of Muntahá  
(nigh it the garden of el-Ma'wá),  
when the lote-tree was covered by that which covered.  
His sight swerved not, nor swept astray :  
he had seen of the Great Signs of his Lord.

LIII 1-18

## HE FROWNED

He frowned and turned away  
that the blind man came to him :  
how should you know ? Perhaps he would cleanse himself,  
and yet be minded, and the Minding profit him.  
But the self-sufficient  
to him you attended :  
though it is not your concern if he does not cleanse himself.  
And he who comes to you eagerly  
and fearfully,  
to him you pay no heed.

Ah no ! It is a Reminding  
(and who wills, shall remember)  
upon pages venerated,  
    uplifted, purified,  
by the hands of Scribes  
    venerable, holy.

Perish Man ! How unmindful he is !  
    Of what did He create him ?  
    Of sperm He created him  
        and decreed him,  
    then the way eased for him,  
    then makes him to die, and buries him,  
    then, when He wills, shall raise him.  
Ah no ! Man has not accomplished His bidding.

Let Man consider his nourishment.  
We poured out the rains abundantly,  
then split We the earth in fissures  
and therein made the grains to grow,  
    and vines, and reeds,  
    and olives, and palms,  
    and dense-tree'd gardens,  
    and fruits, and pastures,  
good things for you and for your flocks.

And when the Blast shall sound,  
the day a man shall flee his brother,  
    his mother, his father,  
    his consort, his sons,  
every man that day shall have business to suffice him.  
Some faces on that day shall shine  
    laughing, joyous :  
some faces on that day shall be dusty,  
    o'erspread with darkness—  
these the Infidels, the Unholy.

LXXX

## MAN

By the Fig and the Olive  
and by the Mount Sinai  
and by this tranquil City !

Surely We have created Man in the fairest symmetry :  
then We have restored him the lowest of the low

(save for those who believe  
and do the works of righteousness :  
for them a reward ungrudging.)

Who after this will make thee incredulous of the Judgment ?  
Is not God the justest of judges ?

xcv

## THE CLATTERER

The Clatterer !  
what is the Clatterer ?  
and who shall teach you what is the Clatterer ?

The Day men shall be like scattered moths,  
and the mountains shall be like plucked wool-tufts.

Then he whose deeds weigh heavy in the Balance  
shall inherit a pleasurable life ;  
but he whose deeds weigh light in the Balance  
shall plunge in the womb of the Pit.

And who shall teach you what is the Pit ?  
A Blazing Fire !

ci

## THE EARTHQUAKE

When Earth shall shake in her quaking,  
and Earth shall throw up her loads,  
and Man shall cry, "What ails her?"

on that day she shall tell her tidings  
as your Lord has revealed unto her.

On that day men shall issue in scatters to see their works ;  
and he who has done a mote's-weight of good shall behold it,  
and he who has done a mote's-weight of ill shall behold it.

XCIX

## THE SPLITTING

When Heaven is split open,  
when the stars are scattered,  
when the seas swarm over,  
when the tombs are o'erthrown,  
every soul shall know its works, the sooner and the later.

O Man ! What deceived you as to your generous Lord  
Who created and shaped and formed you in symmetry,  
and composed you after that pattern He would ?

No, no ! But indeed you deny the truth of the Judgment ;  
yet of a certainty there are Guardians appointed over you,  
venerable writers  
who know whatever you do.

Then the holy shall dwell in bliss,  
and the unholy shall dwell in a fiery furnace,  
roasting therein on the Day of Judgment,  
nor shall they ever be absent from it.

And who shall teach you what is the Day of Judgment ?  
Again, who shall teach you what is the Day of Judgment ?

A day when no soul shall possess aught to succour another soul:  
that day the Command shall belong unto God.

LXXXII

## THE DARKENING

When the sun shall be darkened,  
when the stars shall be thrown down,  
when the mountains shall be set moving,  
when the pregnant camels shall be neglected,  
when the savage beasts shall be mustered,  
when the seas shall be set boiling,  
when the souls shall be coupled,  
when the buried infant shall be asked  
    for what crime she was slain,  
when the scrolls shall be unrolled,  
when heaven shall be stripped off,  
when the Furnace shall be set blazing,  
when Paradise shall be brought nigh :  
    every soul shall know what it wrought.

No ! I swear by the slinkers,  
the runners, the sinkers,  
by the night swarming,  
by the dawn sighing,  
truly this is the word of a venerable messenger,  
having power with the Lord of the Throne, firm,  
obeyed, moreover trusty.

Your tribesman is not possessed :  
he truly beheld him on the bright horizon :  
he is not niggardly of the Unseen.

It is not the word of an accursed demon :  
where then are you going ?

It is naught but a Minding for all creatures,  
for those of you who would walk aright :  
but will you shall not, except the Lord of the World desires it.

LXXXI

## THE LOOSED ONES

By the loosed ones successively  
storming tempestuously ;  
by the scatterers scattering,  
severally severing,  
hurling a Minding,  
excusing, or warning :

surely that you are threatened with will come to pass.

When the stars shall be extinguished,  
when the heavens shall be split,  
when the mountains shall be scattered,  
when the Apostles' time is set,  
to what day shall they be delayed ?  
To the Day of the Decision.

And who shall teach you what is the Day of the Decision ?

*Woe that day unto those who cry it lies.*

Did We not destroy the First Ones,  
and then follow them with the Last Ones ?  
So We serve the evildoers.

*Woe that day unto those who cry it lies.*

Did We not create you of a mean water,  
that We laid within a sure lodging  
till a time and term decreed ?

We determined : excellent determiners are We.

*Woe that day unto those who cry it lies.*

Made We not the earth to be a housing  
for the living and for the dead ?  
Set We not there soaring mountains ?  
Sated you with sweetest waters ?

*Woe that day unto those who cry it lies.*

Depart to that you cried was lies !  
Depart to a triple-massing shadow  
unshading against the blazing flame  
that shoots sparks like dry faggots,  
sparks like to golden herds.

*Woe that day unto those who cry it lies.*



That the Day of the Decision We shall join you with the  
First Ones :

If you have a trick, try you now to trick Me !

*Woe that day unto those who cry it lies.*

Truly the godfearing shall dwell mid shades and fountains,  
and such fruits as their hearts shall crave for :

" Eat and drink to pleasure, for the works ye wrought !"

Even so shall We recompense the righteous.

*Woe that day unto those who cry it lies.*

" Eat and take your joy this little while, you sinners !"

*Woe that day unto those who cry it lies.*

When they are bidden " Bow you down !" they bow not.

*Woe that day unto those who cry it lies.*

In what recital after this will they believe ?

LXXVII

## THE RESURRECTION

No ! I swear by the Resurrection.

No ! I swear by the self-censuring soul.

Does Man suppose that We shall not regather his bones ?

But yes : We are able even to order his fingertips.

Yet Man desires to go his lecherous way,

asking, " Ha, when shall be the Day of Resurrection ?"

When the sight shall be dazzled

and the moon shall be eclipsed

and the sun and the moon shall be united.

Man that day will cry, " O whither shall I flee ?"

Ah no ! no refuge :

only unto your Lord that day shall be your homing.

Man shall be told that day of his works, the sooner and later :

nay, but Man shall see clearly against himself

even though he launch his excuses.

LXXV 1-15

## THE BACKBITER

Woe unto every backbiter, slanderer,  
who has gathered riches and counted them over  
thinking his riches have made him immortal.

Ah no ! he shall be thrust into the Crusher :  
and who shall teach you what is the Crusher ?

The Fire of God kindled  
roaring over the hearts,  
clamped down upon them,  
on columns outstretched.

CIV

## THE HYPOCRITE

See you him who cries lie to the Judgment ?  
It is he who pushes off the orphan,  
and urges not to nourish the poor.

Woe to those, praying,  
who are unmindful of their Prayer  
yet make much show of it,  
and refuse aid to need.

CVII

## NIGHT

By the brooding night  
and the radiant day !  
By Him who created male and female :  
your toil is to scattered ends.

Whoso gives and is godfearing  
and cries true the Fair Recompense,  
surely We shall ease him to the Easing.

Whoso is miserly, grasping  
and cries lies to the Fair Recompense,  
surely We shall ease him to the Hardship.  
His wealth shall not avail him when he falls into the Pit.

Upon Us rests the Guidance :  
to Us belongs the Last and First.

I have warned you of a Fire flaming  
that shall roast only the unholiest  
who cries lies and turns his back :

but the holiest shall escape it  
who gives his wealth, self-cleansing,  
nor accords any favour for recompense  
but seeking the Face of his Lord Most High,  
and he shall assuredly be satisfied.

XCH

## THE ENVELOPER

Have you heard the news of the Enveloper ?

Faces on that day downcast,  
labouring, toilworn,  
roasting at a scorching fire,  
watered at a boiling fountain,  
fed but upon cactus thorn  
unfattening, unappeasing hunger.

Faces on that day jocund,  
with their striving content,  
in a sublime garden,  
hearing there no blather ;  
therein a living fountain,  
therein uplifted couches  
and goblets set forth  
and cushions all arrayed  
and carpets outspread.

Do they not consider how the Camel was created,  
how heaven was lifted up,  
how the mountains were hoisted,  
how the earth was outstretched ?

Remind them ! For thou art but a Reminder :  
thou art not charged to oversee them.

But he who turns his back, and disavows God,  
God shall torment him with the greatest Torment.

Truly, to Us is their return :  
then upon Us shall rest their reckoning.

LXXXVIII

## THE TERROR

When the Terror descends  
none shall deny its descending—  
abasing, exalting.

When the earth shall be rocked  
and the mountains crumbled  
become a dust scattered,  
and you shall be three bands—

Companions of the Right ( O Companions of the Right ! )  
Companions of the Left ( O Companions of the Left ! )

and the Outstrippers : the Outstrippers  
these brought nigh the Throne  
in the gardens of delight  
( what throng of the Former,  
how few of the Latter ! )

upon close-wrought couches  
reclining upon them, face to face,  
immortal youths going round about them  
with goblets, and ewers, and cups of sweet ambrosia  
( no brows throbbing, no heads reeling )  
and fruits as they shall choose,  
and flesh of fowl as they shall yearn for,  
and wide-eyed houris  
like to hidden pearls,  
this their recompense for past labours :  
there shall they hear no idle talk, no chatter of sin,  
only the utterance " Peace, Peace ! "

The Companions of the Right (O Companions of the Right !)  
mid thornless lote-trees  
and serried acacias  
and spreading shade  
and outpoured waters  
and abounding fruits  
unfailing, unforbidden,  
and upraised couches.

Perfectly We formed them, perfect,  
and We made them spotless virgins,  
chastely amorous, like of age  
for the Companions of the Right.

A throng of the Former  
and a throng of the Latter.

The Companions of the Left (O Companions of the Left !)  
mid searing winds and boiling waters  
and the shadow of a smoking blaze  
neither cool, neither goodly :  
and before they revelled in plenty  
and persisted in the Great Sin,  
ever saying,

“ When we are dead, and dust and bones, shall we be raised  
again,  
and our fathers of long ago ? ”

SAY : “ The First Ones, and the Last Ones  
shall be gathered to a time of a known day.

Then indeed you erring ones, you deniers  
shall eat of the tree called Zakkoum  
and fill therewith your bellies,  
and drink thereafter boiling water  
lapping it down like thirsty camels.”

Such shall be their entertainment on the Day of Judgment.

It is We who created you : why will you not believe ?  
What think you ? The seed you spill—

Do you yourselves create it, or are We the creators ?

We have decreed among you Death : We shall not be  
outstripped :

that We may exchange the likes of you, and refashion you in a  
form you know not.

You have now known the first fashioning : why will you not  
remember ?

What think you ? The soil you till—

Do you yourselves sow it, or are We the sowers ?

Had We wished, We would have made it stubble : and you  
would have bitterly jested—

“ We are debt-loaded ; nay, we have been robbed ! ”

What think you ? The water you drink—

Did yourselves send it from the clouds, or did We send it ?

What think you ? The fire you kindle—

Did yourselves rear its timber, or was it We who reared  
it ?

Indeed We fashioned it to be a Reminding, and a boon to the  
desert-dwellers.

Then magnify the Name of thy Lord Most Great.

No ! I swear by the settings of the stars  
(and that, did you know it, is a mighty oath)

this is indeed a noble Recitation

in a hidden Scripture

none but the purified shall touch :

a Revelation from the Lord of the Worlds.

Do you hold such news in disdain ?

Do you make it your living to cry lies ?

Why, but when the soul leaps to the throat of the dying  
and you that hour are watching

(and We are nigher him than you : but you do not see Us),  
why, if you are not at Our disposal,

do you not bring back his soul, if you speak truly ?

Then if he be brought nigh the Throne  
there shall be repose and ease, and a garden of delight ;  
and if he be a Companion of the Right

“ Peace upon you, Companion of the Right ! ”

But if he be of them that cried lies

there shall be an entertainment all of boiling water  
and the roasting in the fiery furnace.

Surely this is the truth of certainty :

Then magnify the Name of thy Lord Most Great.

LVI

## THE TIDINGS

Of what do they question one another ?

Of the solemn tidings  
on which they are at variance.

Ha ! They shall know :  
again ha ! they shall know.

Have We not made the earth as a couch,  
and the mountains as tent-pegs ?

And We have created you ones and ones,  
and made your slumber an intermission,  
and made night for a covering,  
and made day for a livelihood.

And We built above you seven unshakables,  
and set there a blazing lantern,  
and sent down out of the swelling clouds a swirling rain  
that We might bring forth seed and shoot  
and dense-tree'd gardens.

The Day of Decision is a fixed time,  
the day when the Trumpet shall be blown, and you come in  
troops,  
and Heaven is opened on swinging gates,  
and the mountains are set moving, and tremble into  
vapour.

Gehenna then shall be lying in wait,  
a repair for transgressors  
to inhabit for endless ages,  
tasting there no coolness, nor any liquor  
but boiling water, and dripping pus,  
a reward appropriate.

For they looked not for an Accounting,  
and boldly cried lies to Our Signs :  
but every thing We have numbered in writing :  
"Taste you this ! We shall add to you only torment."

But for the godly shall be a goodly refuge,  
gardens and vines,  
swelling virgins of like age,  
and brimming cups.

There shall they hear no idle talk, no lying :  
" A reward from your Lord, a gift amply accounted."

The Lord even of the heavens and earth, and all that lies  
between them, the All-Compassionate:

they shall not obtain of Him any word :

the day when the Spirit and the Angels stand in ranks,  
unspeaking, save whom the All-Compassionate allows,  
and he shall declare the Truth.

That is the True Day : who wills, shall take unto his Lord  
a homing.

Now We have warned you of an imminent torment :  
the day when every man shall see the things his hands have  
put forward,  
and the infidel shall cry, " O would that I were dust !"

LXXVIII

## PIETY

It is not piety, that you turn your faces to the East and the  
West.

True piety is this :  
to believe in God, and the Last Day,  
the Angels, the Book and the Prophets,  
to give of one's substance, however cherished,  
to kinsmen and orphans,  
the needy, the traveller,  
and to ransom the slave,  
to perform the Prayer, to pay Alms.  
And they who fulfil their covenants  
when they have engaged in a covenant,  
and endure with fortitude  
misfortune, hardship and peril,  
these are they who are true in their faith,  
these are the truly godfearing.

II 172



## INFIDELS

As for the infidels, it is all one to them  
whether you warn them or warn them not ;  
they will not believe.

God has sealed their hearts and their ears ;  
over their eyes is a covering ;  
for them waits a mighty torment.

Men there are, who declare,  
“ We believe in God and the Last Day ”,  
yet they are not believers.

They would trick God, and those who believe ;  
yet none they deceive hut themselves,  
and of that they are not aware.

In their hearts was a sickness ;  
God has increased their sickness ;  
for them waits a dire punishment for crying lies.

When they are bidden, “ Work not corruption in the earth ”,  
they reply, “ We are only reformers.”

But in truth they are the corrupters ;  
only they are not aware.

When they are bidden, “ Believe, as others have believed ”,  
they reply, “ Shall we believe like fools ?”

But in truth they are the fools ;  
only they know it not.

When they meet with believers, they say, “ We believe ” ;  
but when they are alone with their Demons, they say,  
“ We are with you ; we were but railing.”

God shall rail at them ;  
He shall give them rope to wander lost in their  
transgression.

These are they who have purchased error for guidance ;  
their traffic has profited them nothing—they are not  
right-guided.

They are like to a man who has kindled a fire :  
when it lit up all about him—  
God took away their light,  
and left them in darkness, unseeing.

Deaf, dumb, blind :  
they shall never return.

Or they are like to a raincloud in heaven :  
darkness is there, thunder, and lightning :  
they thrust their fingers in their ears because of the  
thunderbolts, fearful of death,  
and God encompasses the Infidels.  
The lightning wellnigh snatches away their sight ;  
whenever it shines on them they walk in it ;  
but when darkness comes over them, they halt ;  
had God so willed, He would have taken away  
their hearing and sight ;  
and God indeed is Omnipotent.

II 5-19

## RIVALRY

Gross rivalry diverted you  
till to the tombs converted you.

Nay ! but knowing you shall be ;  
again, nay ! but knowing you shall be.  
Nay ! did you know it with the knowledge of certainty,  
Hell's blaze you shall see ;  
again, indeed you shall see it with the eye of certainty ;  
again, you shall be asked that day touching your material  
felicity.

CII

## THE PROPHETS REJECTED

The Hour is at hand : the moon is split.

Yet if they see a Sign they turn away, and exclaim, " A  
continuous sorcery !"  
" Lies !" they cry, and follow their lusts ; but every command  
is unchangeable.

There has come to them tidings containing an  
admonishment,  
wisdom mature : yet warnings avail not.

Turn from them then. On the day when the Caller shall call  
to a horrible thing,  
abasing their eyes they shall issue from the tombs like scattered  
grasshoppers,  
running with outstretched necks to the Caller. The Infidels  
shall say, "This is a hard day!"

The people of Noah cried lies before them ; they cried lies to  
Our servant, and said, "A madman !" He was rejected ;  
and he prayed to his Lord, "I am overcome : O succour  
me !"

And We opened the gates of heaven and loosed rains tor-  
rential,  
and split the earth into gushing fountains ; and the waters  
met by order decreed.

Then bore We him on a well-planked, well-ealked vessel  
running before Our eyes : a recompense for him denied :  
We left it for a Sign. *Will any be mindful ?*  
*How then were My punishment and My warnings ?*  
*We have made the Recitation easy for minding : will any be*  
*mindful ?*

Ad cried lies.

*How then were My punishment and My warnings ?*

We unleashed against them a roaring wind on a day of  
disaster continuous,

plucking up men as though they were stumps of uprooted  
palm-trees.

*How then were My punishment and My warnings ?*

*We have made the Recitation easy for minding : will any be*  
*mindful ?*

Thamud cried lies to the warnings.

They said, "Shall we follow just one man of ourselves ?  
Then indeed we should be in error and insanity.

Has the Minding been committed to him, out of all of us ?  
No ! but he is an impudent liar."

"To-morrow they shall know who indeed is the impudent liar.

We shall send the She-camel as a trial for them : watch them then, and be steadfast !

Proclaim to them that the water is divided between them : each draught shall come to each in turn."

Then they called to their tribesman, and he took in hand, and hamstrung her.

*How then were My punishment and My warnings ?*

We unleashed against them a single shout ; and they were as the wattles of a pen-builder.

*We have made the Recitation easy for minding : will any be mindful ?*

The people of Lot cried lies to the warnings.

We unleashed against them a hurricane of pebbles, all save the house of Lot ; them We delivered at daybreak—

a grace and a favour from Us ; even so We recompense the grateful.

We had warned them of Our violence ; but they disputed the warnings.

Even his guests they had solicited of him ; so we blotted out their sight—

"Taste now *My punishment and My warnings !*"—

and in the morning early an unchangeable punishment came upon them :

"Taste now *My punishment and My warnings !*"

*We have made the Recitation easy for minding : will any be mindful ?*

To the house of Pharaoh the warnings came.

They cried lies to Our Signs, every one of them ; and We seized them like a wrestler mighty, powerful.

Are your infidels better men than those ? Or do you have an immunity written in the Scriptures ?

Or do they say, "We are all together succoured" ?

The host shall all be routed, and turn their backs.

Nay, but the Hour is their appointed time ; and the Hour is exceeding calamitous and bitter—

surely the sinners are in error and insanity—

the day when they shall be trailed into the Fire on their faces : "Taste now the touch of Sakar !"

Surely We have created every thing after a decree :  
Our Commandment is a single word, like the twinkling of  
an eye.

We have destroyed your fellows : *will any be mindful ?*  
Every thing they have done is in the Scriptures :  
every thing, small and great, is duly inscribed.

Surely the godfearing shall dwell mid gardens and rivers  
in an abode of truthfulness, in the presence of an Omnipotent King.

LIV

## PAST AND PRESENT

Even before thee We sent Messengers among the parties of  
the Ancients ;  
but not one Messenger came to them, without they derided  
him.

So We thread it into the hearts of the wrongdoers :  
they believe not in him : yet the example of the Ancients  
has gone before them.

What though We opened for them a gate in Heaven, while  
yet they were mounting through it  
they would cry, " Our sight has been intoxicated, that is all ;  
or rather we are a people bewitched."

XV 10-15

## THE PROPHETS REWARDED

The greater part of the Ancients before them were in error,  
yet We had sent Warners among them.  
Consider now what was the end of the warned  
(except the faithful servants of God).

Noah called upon Us (excellent answerers We !)  
and We delivered him and his folk from the dire catastrophe :  
We made his seed alone the survivors  
and bequeathed upon him among the latter peoples,  
“ Peace upon Noah among all creatures !”

*So We recompense the well-doers.*

*He was in truth of Our believing servants.*

Then We drowned all the rest of them.

Of his following was Abraham .

when he came to his Lord with a pure heart,  
and said to his father and his people, “ What worship you ?  
Seek you falsely other gods than the One God ?

What think you then of the Lord of the Worlds ?”

He glanced a single glance upon the stars

and said, “ I am ailing.”

So they turned their backs on him and all departed.

Then he turned aside to their gods and said, “ Do you not  
eat ?

What ails you, then, that you do not speak ?”

And he darted upon them, smiting with his right hand.

All hastening advanced against him,

and he said, “ Do you worship the things yourselves have  
hewed ?

God—He created you, and that you have fashioned.”

“ Build him an edifice”, they cried, “ and fling him on the  
flames !”

They would have tricked him ; but We made them the  
underdogs.

He said, “ I will betake me to my Lord, and He shall guide  
me.

Lord, give me a son, who shall be among the righteous.”

We gave him good tidings of a prudent boy ;

and when he was of an age to walk with his father

Abraham said, “ My son, I see in a dream that I should  
sacrifice you. Consider now, what think you ?”

He answered, “ Father, do as you are bidden ; God willing,  
you will find me steadfast.”

So, when they had committed themselves to God, he laid  
him upon his forehead.

Then We called to him, "O Abraham,  
you have confirmed the vision." (*So We recompense the well-  
doers.*)

This surely was the perspicuous test :  
and We ransomed him with a noble sacrifice,  
and bequeathed upon him among the latter peoples,  
"Peace upon Abraham !"

*So We recompense the well-doers.*

*He was in truth of Our believing servants.*

And We blessed Abraham and Isaac ; but among their  
seed some were well-doers, and some perspicuous wrongers of  
themselves.

We also showed favour to Moses and Aaron  
and delivered them and their people from the dire catas-  
trophe

and succoured them, so that they were the vanquishers.

We gave to them the evidential Book  
and guided them to the straight path  
and bequeathed upon them among the latter peoples,  
"Peace upon Moses and Aaron !"

*So We recompense the well-doers.*

*They were in truth of Our believing servants.*

Elias too was among the Envoys  
when he said to his people, "Will you not be godfearing ?  
Do you pray to Baal, and desert the Best of Creators,  
God, your Lord, and the Lord of your fathers of old ?"  
They cried him lies ; and they shall be brought to the Fire  
(except the faithful servants of God).

We bequeathed to him among the latter peoples,  
"Peace upon Elias !"

*So We recompense the well-doers.*

*He was in truth of Our believing servants.*

Lot too was among the Envoys,  
when We delivered him and his folk all together  
(save an old woman who stayed behind) ;  
then We destroyed all the rest of them.  
Indeed, you pass over them in the morning  
and by night : will you not have reason ?

Jonah too was among the Envoys,  
when he fled to the laden ship  
and cast lots with them ; and the lot fell against him  
so that the Fish swallowed him, being yet in blame.  
Had he not been a magnifier of God  
he would have remained in its belly to the Day of Resurrec-  
tion.

We threw him up on the bare shore, ailing,  
and caused to spring up over him a tree of gourds.  
After We sent him to a hundred thousand or more  
and they believed ; and We gave them joy for a while.

XXXVII 69-148

## THE PROPHETS' GIFTS

To Moses and Aaron We gave the Discrimination, and a  
radiance and reminder for the godfearing  
who dread their Lord in the Unseen, and are in terror of  
the Hour.

This is a blessed Reminding that We sent down : do you  
then deny it ?

To Abraham We gave his righteousness beforetimes—and  
We knew him well—

when he said to his father and his people, " What are these  
images to which you apply yourselves ?"

They answered, " We found our fathers worshipping them."

He said, " You and your fathers alike are in perspicuous  
error."

They said, " Have you come to us with the truth, or are you  
a trifler ?"

" Nay ", he replied. " Your Lord is the Lord of the heavens  
and earth ; He created them ; to this I bear witness before  
you.

By the One God, I shall trick your idols when you have  
turned your backs and departed."

And he laid them in fragments, all but their great one, that  
haply they might return to it.



"Who did this to our gods?" they said. "Certainly he is a wrongdoer."

They said, "We have heard a youth named Abraham reviling them."

"Bring him hither", they said, "before the eyes of the people, that haply they may testify."

They said, "Was it you that did this to our gods, Abraham?"

He answered, "No; it was this their great one that did it. Come, question them, if they can speak."

So they returned back to themselves and said, "Yourselves are the evildoers."

Then they turned somersault, saying, "You know that they cannot speak."

He said, "What, do you worship, instead of God, that which can neither profit nor mischief you? Fie on you, and on that you worship instead of God; will you not have reason?"

They shouted, "Burn him, and succour your gods, if you will be doers."

We said, "O fire, be cold, and a safety for Abraham."

Thus they would have tricked him: but we made them the utter losers.

And We delivered him, and Lot, to the land which We blessed for all creatures;

We gave him likewise Isaac and Jacob, as a further boon; all of them We made righteous;

and We made them leaders guiding by Our commandment; We inspired them to do good works, and perform the Prayer, and give Alms; and they worshipped Us.

To Lot We gave Wisdom and Knowledge, and We delivered him from the city that practised abominations; indeed they were an evil, perverted people.

We also admitted him to Our Mercy; for he was a righteous man.

Noah too, when he called beforetimes, and We answered him, and delivered him and his folk from the dire catastrophe, and succoured him against the people who cried lies to Our Signs; they were an evil people, therefore We drowned them all together.

David also, and Solomon, when they arbitrated concerning

the tilth that the people's sheep had laid waste ; We bore witness to their arbitration.

To Solomon We gave understanding of the matter ; to both We gave Wisdom and Knowledge. With David We constrained the mountains and birds to chant Our praise ; and We were doers.

We taught David likewise to fashion for you mail, to fortify you against your malice ; and are you grateful ?

And to Solomon We subjected the wind tempestuous, to run at his command to the land We blessed ; We had ever knowledge of all things ;

and certain of the Demons to dive for him, and do sundry tasks besides ; and We kept watch over them.

Job likewise, when he called upon his Lord, " Evil has afflicted me ; yet Thou art the most merciful of the merciful."

We answered him, and lifted the evil that lay upon him, and gave him back his folk, and the like of them with them, for a Mercy from Us, and a Reminder to those who worship Us.

Ishmael also, and Idris, and Dhul Kifl ; each one of them was steadfast,

and We admitted them to Our Mercy ; for they were righteous men.

So too Jonah, when he went away enraged, thinking We could do nothing against him ; he called in the shadows, " No god is there but Thou. Glory be to Thee ! I have been among the evildoers."

We answered him, and delivered him from grief ; so We deliver all believers.

Likewise Zachariah, when he called upon his Lord, " O Lord, leave me not lonely, for Thou art the best of inheritors."

We answered him, and gave him John, mending his wife for him. They all hastened in concert to good works, and prayed to Us in love and fear, being humble before Us.

She also who guarded her virginity ; We breathed into her of Our Spirit, and made her and her son to be a Sign to all creatures.

This your Community is one community. I am your Lord ; therefore worship Me.

xxi 49-92

## PROPHETS ALL

TA SIN MIN : These are the Signs of the perspicuous Book.

Perchance thou consumest with care, that they will not believe ;

did We so will, We would send down upon them out of heaven a Sign, to which their necks would be forever humbly bowed.

No Reminding comes to them from the Merciful newly imparted, but they still turn away from it.

Lies they have cried ; soon tidings shall come to them of that they mocked at.

What, have they not seen the earth, how many things We have made to spring up in it, of every generous kind ?

*Surely in that is a Sign ; yet the most part of them believe not.*

*Surely thy Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful.*

When thy Lord called unto Moses, " Go to the people, the evildoers,

the people of Pharaoh : will they not fear betimes ?"

he said, " O my Lord, I fear they will cry me lies,

and my breast shall be narrowed, and my tongue will not be loosed. Send then to Aaron.

Moreover they have against me a crime I have committed, and I fear they may slay me."

God said, " Not so ; but go you together both with Our Signs ; We shall be with you, listening.

Go to Pharaoh and say, ' We are the Messenger of the Lord of the Worlds ;

send forth with us the children of Israel.' "

Pharaoh said, " Did we not rear you among us, yet a child ? Did you not sojourn among us many years of your life ?

And then you did the deed that you did ; you are one of the ungrateful ones."

Moses answered, " I did it then, because I was in error.

So I fled from you because I was afraid of you ; but my Lord has given me Wisdom, and made me one of His Envoys.

Thus is the favour you reproach me with, who have enslaved the children of Israel."

Pharaoh said, " And who, pray, is the Lord of the Worlds ?"

Moses answered, "The Lord of the heavens and earth, and all that lies between them, had you only faith."

Pharaoh said to those about him, "Do you not hear?"

Moses said, "He is your Lord, and Lord of your fathers of old."

Pharaoh answered, "Your Messenger who has been sent to you is surely mad!"

Moses said, "He is the Lord of East and West, and all that lies between them, had you only reason."

Pharaoh answered, "If you take for yourself another god but me, I swear I will put you among the imprisoned."

Moses said, "What if I brought you a perspicuous thing?"

Pharaoh answered, "Bring it then, if you are a truthful man."

So Moses cast down his staff; and behold, it was a perspicuous serpent.

He also drew forth his hand; and behold, it was white to the beholders.

Pharaoh said to the Council about him, "This man is a cunning sorcerer

who aims to expel you from your land by his sorcery. What do you prescribe?"

They said, "Let him be for a while, and his brother; and send summoners among the cities

to bring you every cunning sorcerer."

So the sorcerers were gathered for a time appointed on a fixed day,

and it was said to the people, "Are you too gathering together?"

Perchance we shall follow the sorcerers, if they should prove the victors."

When the sorcerers came, they said to Pharaoh, "Shall we have a reward then, if we prove the victors?"

Pharaoh answered, "Yes; and you shall be admitted near to my throne."

Moses said to them, "Cast down what you have to cast!"

They cast down their ropes and their staffs, saying, "By the might of Pharaoh we shall prove the victors."

Then Moses cast down his staff; and behold, it swallowed up all that they had forged.

And the sorcerers cast themselves down prostrating; they said, "We believe in the Lord of the Worlds, the Lord of Moses and Aaron."

Pharaoh cried, " You have believed in him before I gave you leave. He is surely the chief of you, who taught you sorcery ; presently you shall know !

I shall surely cut off your right hands and left feet ; then I shall crucify you all."

They answered, " No harm in that ; we shall return to our Lord.

We have hope that our Lord will forgive us our sins, for we are the first of the believers."

Then revealed We to Moses, " Go by night with My servants, for you will be followed."

Pharaoh sent summoners among the cities saying, " Those are a scant band and they are provoking us to anger ; we are a host, and upon our guard."

Then expelled We them from gardens and fountains, treasures, and a generous lodging ; so We did ; and We gave those things for an inheritance to the children of Israel.

Then they followed them, marching with the sunrise ; and when the two hosts viewed each other, the companions of Moses cried, " Ha, we are overtaken !"

Moses said, " Not by any means ! My Lord is with me ; He will guide me."

And We revealed to Moses, " Smite the sea with thy staff !" And the sea was split in twain, and each part was like a huge mountain ;

and We brought the others nigh to that place and delivered Moses and those who were with him all together, then We drowned the others.

*Surely in that is a Sign ; yet the most part of them believe not.*

*Surely thy Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful.*

Recite to them the tidings of Abraham when he said to his father and his people, " What are you worshipping ?"

They answered, " We worship idols, and all the day apply ourselves to them."

He said, " Do they hear you when you call ? Or do they profit you, or do they mischief ?"

They answered, " No ; but we found our fathers so doing."  
He said, " Have you considered what you were worshipping,  
you and your fathers of ancient days ?

They are an enemy to me, save the Lord of the Worlds  
who created me, and still guides me,  
who feeds me, and waters me,  
who, when I am sick, heals me,  
who shall cause me to die, and then revive me,  
and who, I hope, will forgive my sin on the Day of Judgment.

Lord, give me Wisdom, and join me with the righteous ;  
accord to me a goodly tongue among the latter peoples,  
and make me an inheritor of the Garden of Bliss.

Forgive my father, who was one of the straying ones,  
and put me not to shame on the Day of Resurrection,  
the day when neither wealth nor sons shall be profitable  
save only to him who comes to God with a pure heart,  
and the Garden is brought nigh to the godfearing,  
and the Blaze is brought out to the erring ones  
to whom it shall be said, ' Where now is that you worshipped  
instead of God ? Do they succour you, or help themselves ?'

Then they and the erring ones shall be hurled into the  
Blaze

and with them the hosts of Iblis all together.

And they shall cry, as they quarrel there in the Blaze,

' By the One God, we were in perspicuous error  
when we equated you to the Lord of the Worlds.

It was the sinners indeed that misled us,  
and there are none to intercede for us,  
not one true friend.

Ah, but could we return again to earth, we would be believers ! "

*Surely in that is a Sign ; yet the most part of them  
believe not.*

*Surely thy Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful.*

The people of Noah cried lies to the Envoys  
when their brother Noah said to them, " Will you not be  
godfearing ?

Surely I am a trusty Messenger for you ;  
then fear you God, and obey you me !

I ask of you no reward for this ; my reward is a charge upon none but the Lord of the Worlds ;

then fear you God, and obey you me !”

They said, “ Shall we believe in you, whom the vilest follow ?”

He said, “ I have no knowledge of what they are doing ; their account concerns only my Lord, were you only aware of it.

But I am not one to drive away the believers ;

I am nothing but a perspicuous Warner.”

They said, “ If you do not stop, Noah, you shall surely be stoned !”

He said, “ O Lord, see, my people have cried me lies ; decide now decisively between me and them, and deliver me and those believers who are with me.”

So We delivered him and those in the laden ship ;

then afterwards We drowned the rest.

*Surely in that is a Sign ; yet the most part of them believe not.*

*Surely thy Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful.*

Ad cried lies to the Envoys

when their brother Hud said to them, “ Will you not be godfearing ?

Surely I am a trusty Messenger for you ;

then fear you God, and obey you me !

I ask of you no reward for this ; my reward is a charge upon none but the Lord of the Worlds.

Will you build on every prominence a sign to amuse yourselves,

and will you take to yourselves castles, haply that you may live for ever ?

When you assault, you assault like tyrants ;

then fear you God, and obey you me !

Fear Him who provided you with that you know,

provided you with flocks, and sons,

gardens, and fountains.

Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a dreadful day.”

They said, “ It is all one to us whether you preach, or are not a preacher ;

this is nothing but the habit of the Ancients,

and we shall certainly not be punished."

So they cried him lies ; and We destroyed them.

*Surely in that is a Sign ; yet the most part of them believe not.*

*Surely thy Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful.*

Thamud cried lies to the Envoys  
when their brother Salih said to them, " Will you not be  
godfearing ?

Surely I am a trusty Messenger for you ;  
then fear you God, and obey you me !

I ask of you no reward for this ; my reward is a charge upon  
none but the Lord of the Worlds.

Will you be left here for ever, secure

in gardens, and fountains,

sown fields, and palms with slender spathes ?

Will you still skilfully hew dwellings out of the mountains ?

Then fear you God, and obey you me !

Obey not the command of the immoderates

who work corruption in the earth, and reform it not."

They said, " You are simply one of those bewitched ones ;  
why, you are nothing but a mortal, like us. Bring you a  
Sign now, if you are a truthful man."

He said, " This is a she-camel ; to her a draught and to you  
a draught, each on a day appointed.

Touch her not with malice, or you will be taken by the  
punishment of a dreadful day."

But they hamstrung her ; and in the morning they repented,  
for the punishment took them.

*Surely in that is a Sign ; yet the most part of them believe not.*

*Surely thy Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful.*

The people of Lot cried lies to the Envoys  
when their brother Lot said to them, " Will you not be  
godfearing ?

Surely I am a trusty Messenger for you ;  
then fear you God, and obey you me !

I ask of you no reward for this ; my reward is a charge upon  
none but the Lord of the Worlds.

What, will you come to the male ones of the creatures,



leaving your wives, that your Lord created for you? Nay, you are a people of trespassers."

They said, "If you do not stop, Lot, you shall surely be expelled!"

Lot said, "I detest that you do.

Lord, deliver me and my folk from what they do!"

So We delivered him and his folk all together

(save an old woman who stayed behind);

then We destroyed the others

and rained a rain on them; evil is the rain on them that have been warned!

*Surely in that is a Sign; yet the most part of them believe not.*

*Surely thy Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful.*

The dwellers in the thicket cried lies to the Envoys when Shuaib said to them, "Will you not be godfearing?"

Surely I am a trusty Messenger for you;

then fear you God, and obey you me!

I ask of you no reward for this; my reward is a charge upon none but the Lord of the Worlds.

Give full measure; be not a cheater;

weigh with the just balance

and defraud not men of their things, nor be criminals working corruption in the earth;

fear Him who created you and the ancient generations."

They said, "You are simply one of the bewitched ones; why, you are nothing but a mortal, like us; in fact, we think you are a liar.

Drop down upon us lumps out of heaven, if you are a truthful man."

He said, "My Lord knows very well what you do."

But they cried him lies; and they were taken by the punishment of the Day of Shadow; that was truly the punishment of a dreadful day.

*Surely in that is a Sign; yet the most part of them believe not.*

*Surely thy Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful.*

Certainly it is a Revelation from the Lord of the Worlds, brought down by the Trusty Spirit upon thy heart, that thou mightest be a Warner,

in a perspicuous Arabic tongue ;  
it is all in the Scriptures of the Ancients.

Was it not for a Sign to them that it is known by the learned  
of the children of Israel ?

But if We had sent it down upon one of the Barbarians  
and he had recited it to them, they would not have be-  
lieved it.

xxvi 1-199

## ADAM

And when your Lord said to the Angels

“ I will place in the earth a vicegerent ”  
they answered

“ Wilt Thou place in it one who will work corruption  
there and shed blood  
while we magnify Thy praise and cry Thee holy holy ? ”  
God said

“ I know very well that you know not.”

And He taught Adam all the names ; then He presented them  
to the Angels, saying

“ Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful  
beings.”

They cried,

“ Glory be to Thee ! We have no knowledge  
except that Thou hast taught us.  
Thou only art the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.”

God said,

“ Adam, inform them of their names.”

And when he informed them of their names, God said

“ Did I not tell you that I know  
the unseen things in the heavens and earth  
and that I know what you disclose and what you  
conceal ? ”

And We said to the Angels

“ Bow down before Adam ”

and all bowed down save Iblis ; he refused disdainfully, and  
was one of the infidels.

Then We said,

“Adam, dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden  
and eat of it plenteously wherever you will  
but draw not near this tree, or you will be among the  
transgressors.”

But Satan caused them to slip on account of it, and made them  
come out of the place where they were.

Then We said

“Go you down  
and be enemies one to the other !  
In earth is a lodging-place for you, and a provision for  
a time.”

And Adam learned words from his Lord, and God turned to  
him again ; truly He is the Relenting, the Merciful.

We said,

“Go you down out of this, all together.  
But truly there shall come to you from Me a  
guidance ;  
and those who follow My guidance, there shall be no  
fear upon them, nor will they sorrow.  
But as for those who are infidel  
and cry lies to My Signs  
they shall be the patrons of the Fire, where they will  
dwell for ever.”

II 28-37

## NOAH

Truly We sent Noah unto his people :

“Warn thy people, before a dire punishment comes upon  
them !”

He said :

“O my people, I am for you a perspicuous Warner.  
Worship God, and fear you Him, and obey you me !  
And He will forgive your sins  
and put off to a stated term ;  
God's term, when it comes, shall not be post-  
poned if you did but know it.”

He said :

“ O my Lord, I have called my people night and day,  
but my calling has done naught save increase their  
aversion.

Whenever I called them, that Thou mightest forgive  
them,  
they put their fingers in their ears  
and covered themselves in their garments  
and persisted still in their arrogant  
disdain.

Then I called them openly,  
then I proclaimed to them, and spoke to them secretly,  
saying, ‘ Beg your Lord’s forgiveness, for He is forgiving.

He will loose heaven on you in rains abounding  
and supply you with great wealth and sons  
and give you gardens and give you rivers.

Why do you not hope that God will be forbearing,  
seeing He created you by stages successive ?  
Behold you not how God created the seven heavens in  
layers

and set the moon there for a light, and the sun for  
a lamp,  
and God raised you from the earth like plants  
then will return you unto it, and bring  
you forth again ?

God has made the earth for you as a carpet  
that you may walk in it by ways hewn through the  
mountains.’ ”

Noah said :

“ O my Lord, they have disobeyed me  
and followed one whose wealth and sons only increase  
his perdition.

They have plotted a monstrous plot  
saying, ‘ Abandon not your gods ;  
abandon not Wadd and Suwá’ ,  
Yaghúth, and Ya’úq, and Nasr.’ ”

They have led many astray ;  
and Thou, do Thou increase not the transgressors but  
in error !”

So, because of their sins, they were drowned, and admitted to  
the Fire ;  
and they found them helpers none, being apart from God.

Noah said :

“ O my Lord, leave not on earth one infidel to dwell  
there.

If Thou leavest them, they will seduce Thy servants  
and beget none but dissolute infidels.

O my Lord, forgive me and my parents  
and whoso enters my house believing, and  
believing men and women,  
and increase not the transgressors but in  
ruin !”

LXXI

## THE FLOOD

We sent Noah to his people : “ I am for you a perspicuous  
Warner.

Ye shall not worship any but God. I fear for you the  
punishment of a painful day.”

Then said the chiefs of his people who believed not, “ We  
see you nothing but a mortal, like us. We see none has  
followed you but the vilest of us, and that without reflection.  
We see not that you have any merit over us ; on the contrary,  
we think you are liars.”

He said, “ O my people, what do you suppose ? If I stand  
upon a clear evidence from my Lord, and He has given me a  
Mercy of His grace, unseen to you, shall we oblige you to  
receive it, seeing that yourselves mislike it ?

O my people, I ask of you no riches for this ; my reward is  
a charge upon none but God. I am not one to drive away the  
believers ; they shall meet their Lord. But I see you are an  
ignorant people.

O my people, who shall succour me against God if I drive them away? Will you not remember?

I do not say to you, 'The treasures of God are in my keeping.' I know not the Unseen. I do not say, 'I am an angel.' I do not say, as to those whom you eye with scorn, that God will not bring them good; God knows very well what is in their souls; if I spoke so, I should indeed be a transgressor."

They said, "Noah, you have disputed with us, and multiplied your disputations. Now bring us what you promise us, if you are a truthful man."

He said, "Only God, if He wills, shall bring it to you; and you can by no means avert it."

My counsel will not profit you, should I desire to counsel you, if God desires to leave you in your error; He is your Lord, and to Him you shall be returned."

(Do they say, "He has forged this"? SAY: "If I have forged it, upon me be my guilt; I am innocent of your guilt.")

It was revealed to Noah, "Not one of thy people shall believe but those who already believe; yet despair not of what they do."

Manufacture the ship before Our eyes and as We inspire; and speak not to Me regarding the transgressors; they shall be drowned."

So he was manufacturing the ship; and whenever any chiefs of his people passed by him they mocked at him. He said, "If you mock at us, yet soon we shall mock at you as you mock us now; shortly you will know

who shall be visited by a shaming punishment, and on whom shall alight an unremitting punishment."

Till, when Our order came, and the oven boiled, We said, "Load into it two of every kind, and thy folk (save him against whom the Word has gone before), and those who believe." But those who believed with him were very few.

He said, "All aboard! In God's name be its course and its anchoring; surely my Lord is forgiving, merciful."

Then the ship ran with them amid waves like mountains ; and Noah cried to his son, who was in a place apart, " Aboard with us, my son ! Be not with the Infidels."

He answered, " I will repair me to a mountain that shall preserve me from the water." Noah said, " None to preserve to-day from God's order, save according to His mercy." And the waves came between them, and he was drowned.

And it was said, " O earth, swallow up thy water ! O heaven, abate !" And the water subsided, the order was accomplished, and the ship keeled upon al-Judi. And it was said, " Away with the transgressing people !"

Noah called upon his Lord and said, " O my Lord, my son is of my folk ; Thy promise is true ; and Thou art the justest of judges."

God said, " Noah, he is not of thy folk. That is not a righteous act ; ask Me not that of which thou hast no knowledge. I exhort thee, lest thou become one of the ignorant."

Noah said, " O my Lord, I seek refuge in Thee, lest I ask Thee that of which I have no knowledge. Except Thou pardonest me and takest compassion on me, I shall be surely lost."

It was said, " Noah, get thee down with peace from Us, and blessings rest on thee and on peoples that shall spring from those who are with thee. Some peoples We shall accord enjoyment for a while ; then there shall smite them from Us a painful punishment."

xi 27-50

## ABRAHAM IS CALLED

And when Abraham said to his father Azar :

" Do you take idols for gods ? I see you,  
and your people, in perspicuous error."

So We were showing Abraham the kingdom  
of the heavens and earth, that he might be  
of those having certainty of faith.

When night outspread over him, he saw a star and said :

“ This is my Lord ! ”

But when it set he said :

“ I love not the setters.”

When he saw the moon rising he said :

“ This is my Lord ! ”

But when it set he said :

“ If my Lord guides me not right,  
I shall surely be of the erring people.”

When he saw the sun rising he said :

“ This is my Lord ! This is greater ! ”

But when it set he said :

“ O my people ! I am innocent  
of that you associate with God.  
I have turned my face to Him  
who created the Heavens and earth  
truly believing ; I am not  
one who associates others with God.”

His people reasoned with him. He said :

“ Do you reason with me on God  
seeing He has guided me aright ?  
I fear not what you associate  
with Him, except my Lord will aught.  
My Lord embraces all things in His knowledge :  
what, will you not remember ?  
How should I fear what you have associated,  
seeing you fear not that you have associated  
with God that whereon He has not sent down  
upon you any authorisation ? ”

Which of the two parties has greater right  
to security, if you do know ?

Those that believe, and have not cloaked  
their faith in transgression, to them belongs  
the true security ; they are rightly guided.

This is Our argument We bestowed  
on Abraham as against his people ;  
whom We will, We raise up in degrees.  
Surely thy Lord is Wise, All-Knowing.

VI 74-83



## ABRAHAM AT MECCA

When his Lord proved Abraham by words, and he fulfilled  
them,

He said : " I appoint you now a leader for mankind."

Abraham answered : " And of my seed ?"

God said : " My covenant touches not the transgressors."

And when We appointed the House a resort for men and a  
refuge

and : " Take as a place of prayer where Abraham stood ",

and We made covenant with Abraham and Ishmael :

" Purify My House for those who go round about it,

and those who retreat there, and bow down and prostrate  
them."

And when Abraham said : " O Lord, make this a city  
secure, and supply its people (such as shall believe  
in God, and the Last Day) with sustaining fruits."

God said : " And those that are infidels, them for a little  
while

I will give joy ; then to the punishment of the Fire

I shall compel them, a very evil journey's end."

And when Abraham, and Ishmael with him,  
was raising the foundations of the Holy House :

" Accept this, Lord, from us ! Thou hearest all, and knowest.

And make us, Lord, submissive unto Thee,

and of our seed make Thou a coogregation

submissive unto Thee, and show unto us

what rites we should perform, and turn unto us ;

surely Thou art the Relenter, the Merciful.

Lord, send among them a Messenger from among them

who shall recite unto them Thy Signs,

and teach them the Book, and Wisdom, and purify them ;

surely Thou art the Mighty, the All-Wise."

Who then turns away from the religion of Abraham  
unless he be foolish in his very soul ?

Him We have chosen in this lower world,

and in the world to come he shall be among the righteous.

When his Lord said to him : " Submit thyself !"  
he said : " I have submitted to the Lord of the Worlds."

Abraham charged the same to his sons, and Jacob :  
" My sons, God has chosen for you the Religion ;  
see that you die not save in true submission !"

II 118-126

## ABRAHAM'S RELIGION

People of the Book ! Why do you dispute  
concerning Abraham ? The Torah was not sent down,  
neither the Gospel, save after him.

What, have you no reason ?

Ha, you are the ones who dispute on what you know ;  
why then dispute you touching a matter  
of which you know nothing ? God knows very well,  
while you know nothing.

No ; Abraham in truth was not a Jew,  
neither a Christian ; but he was a Muslim  
and one pure of faith ; certainly he was never  
one of the polytheists.

III 58-60

## THE STORY OF JOSEPH

ALIF LAM RA :

These are the Signs of the perspicuous Book.  
We have sent it down as an Arabic Recitation :  
it may be perchance you will have reason.  
We will recount to thee the fairest of stories,  
in that We have revealed to thee this Recitation  
even though before it thou wast one of the heedless.

When Joseph said to his father,  
" Father, I have seen eleven stars  
and the sun and the moon—I saw them prostrating to me ",  
Jacob said, " O my son, recount not your vision  
to your brothers, lest they conspire against you ;  
for Satan is a perspicuous enemy to Man.  
Even so your Lord will choose you, and teach you  
the interpretation of riddles, and perfect His blessing on you  
and upon Jacob's household, as He perfected it  
of old upon your ancestors, Abraham and Isaac ;  
surely your Lord is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

Truly in Joseph and his brethren  
there were Signs for those who ask questions.

When they said, " Certainly, Joseph and his brother  
are more beloved of our father than we ;  
nevertheless, we are a numerous band.  
Surely our father is in perspicuous error."  
" Kill you Joseph, or cast him out to a land,  
that your father's face may be free for you  
and thereafter you shall be a righteous people."  
" No, slay not Joseph ", one of them said,  
" but cast him down to the bottom of the pit ;  
some travellers will pick him out, if you do so."

" Father ", they said, " why do you not trust us  
with Joseph ? Be sure, we are devoted to him.  
Send him with us to-morrow, to frolic  
and play ; be sure, we shall look after him."

Jacob answered, " Truly it grieves me  
that you should go with him, for I fear the wolf  
may eat him, while you are being heedless of him."  
" If the wolf eats him ", they said, " and we a band  
so numerous, then indeed we would be failures."

So when they went with him, and were agreed  
to put him in the bottom of the well,  
and We revealed to him, " Thou shalt inform them  
of this their doing, when they are unaware ",  
and they came to their father with the night weeping,

they said, " O father, we went running races  
and left Joseph behind with our things ;  
so the wolf ate him ; of course you will not  
believe us, even though we should tell the truth."  
And they brought him his shirt with false blood on it.  
" No !" cried Jacob. " Your spirits tempted you  
to do somewhat. But come, sweet patience !  
God will help me to bear what you describe."

Then came travellers, and they sent one of them,  
a water-drawer, who let down his bucket  
and " Good news !" he cried. " Here is a young lad."  
And they hid him, a likely merchandise ;  
but God knew well what they were doing.  
Then they sold him for a paltry price,  
a few dirhams ; for they set small store by him.  
He that bought him, being from Egypt,  
said to his wife, " Give him goodly lodging,  
and it may be that he will profit us ;  
or we may take him for our own son."  
So We established Joseph in the land,  
and that We might teach him the interpretation  
of riddles. God prevails in His purpose,  
only the most part of men do not know it.  
When he was fully grown, We gave him Wisdom  
and Knowledge ; so We reward the well-doers.

Now the woman in whose house he was  
solicited him, and closed the doors on them.  
" Come ", she said, " take me !" " God be my refuge !"  
he answered. " Your husband is my master,  
and he has given me a goodly lodging ;  
truly, the transgressors do not prosper."  
For she desired him ; and he would have taken her  
but that he saw the Proof of his Lord ;  
so We averted from him evil and abomination,  
and he was one of Our devoted servants.  
They raced to the door ; and she tore his shirt  
from behind. They encountered her lord by the door.  
" What is the recompense ", she cried, " of him who purposes  
evil against your folk, but that he should be  
thrown into prison, or punished painfully ?"

"It was she solicited me", said Joseph ;  
and a witness of her folk testified,  
"If his shirt is torn from before  
then she has spoken true, and he is a liar ;  
but if his shirt is torn from behind  
then she has lied, and he is a truthful man."  
When he saw the shirt was torn from behind  
he exclaimed, "This is you women's cunning !  
Certainly the cunning of you women is enormous.  
Joseph, avert from this ; and you, woman, ask pardon  
for your sin ; you have committed a wickedness."

Certain women in the city said, "The Governor's wife  
solicited her page-boy ; he took her amorous fancy ;  
we see she is in perspicuous error."  
When she heard their sly whispers, she sent to them  
and made ready for them a fair repast ;  
then she gave to each one of them a knife.  
"Come forth, attend to them !" she called to Joseph ;  
and when they saw him, they so admired him  
that they cut their hands, exclaiming,  
"God preserve us ! This is no mortal ;  
he is no other but a noble angel."  
"So now you see", she said, "the one you blamed me for.  
Yes, I solicited him ; but he abstained.  
Yet if he will not do what I command him  
be shall be imprisoned, and be one of the wretched."  
"My Lord", cried Joseph, "prison is dearer to me  
than the thing these women invite me to ;  
yet if Thou turnest not from me their cunning  
I shall fall for them, and be a foolish man."  
So his Lord answered him, and turned from him  
their cunning ; truly He hears and knows all.

Then it seemed good to them, after seeing the Signs,  
that they should imprison him for a while.  
There entered the prison with him two youths,  
and one of them said to the other, "I dreamed that I  
was pressing grapes." The other youth said,  
"I dreamed that I was carrying on my head  
bread, that the birds were eating of. Declare to us  
its interpretation ; we see you are a well-doer."

Joseph answered, " No food shall come to you for your sustenance, ere I have declared to you its interpretation, before it comes to pass. This I shall tell you is that God has taught me ; I have forsaken the religion of a people who believe not in God, and moreover have no faith in the world to come. I have followed my forefathers' religion, even that of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob ; not ours is it to associate aught with God. That is of God's grace to us, and to all men, but the most part of men are not grateful. Say, which is better, my fellow-prisoners—many lords at variance, or the One Triumphant God ? That which you worship, apart from Him, is nothing but names yourselves have named and your fathers ; God has sent down no authorisation touching them. Judgment belongs only to God ; He has ordained that you shall not worship any but Him. That is Religion, true and immutable ; but the most part of men do not know it. Fellow-prisoners, one of you shall serve his master with wine ; the other shall be crucified, and the birds will eat of his head. The case whereon you enquire is so determined." Then he said to the one he deemed should be saved, " Remember me when you stand before your master." But Satan caused him to forget to mention Joseph to his master, so that he continued in the prison for certain years.

And the king said, " I saw in a dream seven fat kine, and seven lean ones devouring them ; likewise seven green ears of corn and seven withered. Ho, my counsellors, pronounce to me upon my vision if you be interpreters of dreams." " A hotchpotch of nightmares !" they responded. " We are no experts at dream-interpretation." Then said the one who had been delivered from prison, remembering after a time,

"I myself will declare to you its interpretation ; send me forth !"

"Joseph, you truthful man, pronounce to us regarding seven fat kine, that seven lean ones were devouring, seven green ears of corn and seven withered ; haply so I shall return to the men, and they will know."

Joseph answered, "You shall sow seven years after your wont ; what you have harvested leave in the ear, save a little you eat. Then thereafter there shall come upon you seven hard years that shall devour what you have set in readiness for them, all save a little that you shall store. Then thereafter a year shall come wherein the people will be succoured, and press in season."

The king said, "Bring him to me !" And when the messenger came to him, Joseph said, "Return to your master, and ask of him, what of the women who cut their hands ? Truly my Lord knows well their cunning." The king said, "What was your purpose, women, when you solicited Joseph ?" They answered, "God preserve us ! We know no evil standing against him." The Governor's wife said, "Now the truth is at last discovered ; I solicited him myself ; Joseph in fact is a truthful man." "This I said", Joseph declared, "that my lord might know I did not betray him secretly ; God guides not the cunning of traitors. Yet I claim not that my soul was innocent—surely the soul of man incites to evil—except inasmuch as my Lord had mercy ; truly my Lord is forgiving and merciful."

The king said, "Bring him to me ! I would attach him to my own person." And when he had spoken with him he said, "To-day you are established

firmly in my favour, and in my trust."

Joseph said, "Appoint me over the store-chambers of the land ; I guard well, and am knowing."

So We established Joseph in the land  
to make his dwelling there wherever he pleased ;  
We reach with Our Mercy whom We will,  
and waste not the wage of the well-doers.  
Yet the reward of the world to come  
is better for the believers who were godfearing.

Joseph's brethren came, and entered to him,  
and he knew them, but they knew him not.  
When he had equipped them with their provision  
he said, "Bring to me a brother of yours  
from your father. Do you not see that I  
fill up the measure, and am the best of hosts ?  
But if you bring him not, no measure shall you  
receive of me, neither shall you come near me."  
They said, "We will solicit him  
of our father ; that we will surely do."  
Joseph said to his servants, "Put their merchandise  
in their saddlebags, that they may recognise it  
when they have returned to their own people ;  
haply then they will come back again."

So, when they had returned to their father  
they said, "Father, the measure is denied to us ;  
do you send with us our brother, that we  
may obtain the measure. We will protect him."  
Jacob said, "Shall I entrust him to you  
otherwise than as I entrusted before  
his brother to you ? God is the best  
Protector, being the most Merciful of the merciful."  
And when they opened their things, they found  
their merchandise restored to them. "Father", they said,  
"what more should we desire ? See, our merchandise  
here is restored to us. We shall provision  
our family ; we shall protect our brother ;  
we shall obtain an extra camel's load—  
that is a measure little enough to grant."



Jacob said, " I will not send him with you until you bring me a solemn pledge by God that you will surely bring him back to me, unless you are encompassed." When they had brought him their solemn pledge, he said, " God is guardian of what we say."

He also said, " O my sons, enter not by one door ; enter by separate doors. Yet I cannot avail you in aught against God ; the Judgment belongs not to any but God ; I have put my trust in Him, and let all trust in Him who seek a guardian."

When they entered as their father bade them it availed them nothing against God ; but it was a need in Jacob's soul that he so satisfied. Verily he was charged with Knowledge that We had taught him, but the most part of men do not know it. And when they entered to Joseph, he said, taking his brother into his arms, " I am your brother ; do not despair of this thing that they have done."

When he had equipped them with their provision he put his drinking-cup into the saddlebag of his brother. Then a herald proclaimed, " Ho, you cameleers, you are robbers !" They said, turning to them, " What is missing that you search for ?" They answered, " We search for the king's goblet. Whoever brings it shall receive a camel's load. That I guarantee." " By the One God ", they said, " you know well that we did not come to work corruption in the land. We are not robbers." They said, " What shall be the penalty of this, if you prove to be liars ?" Joseph's brothers answered, " Let the penalty be this : in whoever's saddlebag the goblet is found, himself shall be the penalty. So we penalise the evildoers."

The herald began with the sacks of the others before his brother's sack ; then he pulled it out of his brother's sack. So We contrived for Joseph's sake ; he could not have taken his brother according to the King's doom except that God willed. Whom We will We raise up in degrees ; over every man having knowledge is One All-Knowing. They said, " If he has stolen, a brother of his stole before." But Joseph secreted it in his soul, and did not disclose it to them, saying, " You are in a worse case ; God knows very well what you were hinting at." " Mighty prince ", they cried, " he has a father, aged and great with years ; take one of us in his stead ; we see you are a well-doer." " God preserve us ", Joseph replied, " lest we should take any other but him in whose possession we found our goods ; for if we did so, we would be transgressors." When they despaired of moving Joseph they conferred privily apart. Said the eldest of them, " Do you not know how your father has taken a solemn pledge from you by the One God ? And how you likewise failed aforetime regarding Joseph ? I will not quit this land until my father gives me leave, or God judges on my behalf ; He is the best of judges. Return you all to your father, and say, ' Father, your son stole ; we do not testify except that we know ; we were no guardians of the Unseen. Enquire of the city where we were, and the caravan in which we set forth ; surely we are truthful men.' "

" No !" cried Jacob. " Your spirits tempted you to do somewhat. But come, sweet patience ! Haply God will bring them all to me ; truly He is the All-Knowing, All-Wise." And he turned from them, and wept, " Alas for Joseph !" And his eyes turned white because of the sorrow that surged within him.

"By the One God", they shouted, "you will cease not to remember Joseph until you are utterly consumed, or numbered among the perishing."

"I make complaint of my sorrow and sadness only to God", Jacob replied to them.

"I know, from God, that which you know not. Depart, my sons, and search out tidings of Joseph and his brother. Do not despair of God's comfort; of God's comfort only the unbelieving people despair."

When they entered to Joseph, they said, "O mighty prince, misery has visited us and our people; we come with merchandise of scant worth. Fill up to us the measure and be charitable to us; for surely God rewards those that are charitable."

"Do you know", he asked them, "what you did with Joseph and his brother, being ignorant?"

"Are you truly Joseph?" they cried.

"I am Joseph", he answered, "and this is my brother. God has been gracious to us. Whosoever fears God, and is steadfast—God wastes not the wage of the well-doers."

"By the One God", they shouted, "God has preferred you above us; we committed wickedness."

Joseph said, "No reproach shall fall on you upon this day; God will forgive you; truly He is the most Merciful of the merciful.

Go, take this my shirt, and cast it on my father's face, and he shall recover his sight; then bring me your family all together."

When the caravan set forth, their father said, "Surely I perceive the scent of Joseph; I beg you, say not again I am doting."

"By the One God", they replied to him, "you are still in your ancient error."

But when the bearer of glad tidings came to him, and laid the shirt upon his face, forthwith his eyes were opened, and he saw.

"Did I not tell you", Jacob said to them,

"I know, from God, that which you know not?"  
"Father", they cried, "ask God's forgiveness  
for our sins; we have committed wickedness."  
Jacob said, "I ask my Lord to forgive you;  
surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful."

When they entered to Joseph, taking  
his father and mother into his arms  
he cried, "Enter you into Egypt  
in security, if God wills."

And he lifted his father and mother  
upon the Throne, and the others fell down  
before him prostrating. "See, father!" he cried.

"Here is the interpretation of my vision  
of long ago; my Lord has made it true.  
He was good to me when He led me forth  
from the prison, and again when He  
brought you out of the desert, after that Satan  
set at variance me and my brethren.

My Lord is gentle to whom He will;  
surely He is the All-Knowing, All-Wise.

O my Lord, Thou hast given me to rule,  
and Thou hast taught me to interpret riddles.

O Creator of the heavens and earth,  
Thou art my Guardian in this lower world  
and in the world to come. Receive me to Thee  
in true submission, and join me with the Righteous."

This is part of the tidings of the Unseen  
that We reveal to thee. Thou wast not with them  
when they agreed upon their plan, plotting  
against Joseph. Yet the most part of men,  
though thou art ever so eager, will not believe.  
Thou askest no reward of them for this;  
it is but a Reminder to all creatures.

How many a Sign in the heavens and earth  
they pass by, and turn their backs upon it!  
For the most part of them believe not  
in God, but that they associate others with Him.  
What? Are they secure that no Enveloping  
of God's punishment will come upon them,  
or that the Hour shall not suddenly  
come upon them, while they are unaware?

SAY : " This is my Path. I call to God  
with open vision, I and those  
whoever follow me. To God be glory !  
I am not one of the polytheists."

We sent not forth any before thee  
but men We revealed to, of the people  
living in the cities. Have they not journeyed  
through the land ? Have they not beheld  
how was the end of those before them ?  
Surely the abode of the Hereafter  
is better for the godfearing ; will you not have reason ?  
Till, when the Messengers despaired, and deemed  
that they were counted liars, there came to them  
succour from Us, and those We willed  
were delivered. Our violence  
cannot be averted from the guilty people.  
In their histories is surely a lesson  
for men of understanding ; it is not  
a story forged, but a confirmation  
of that lying before, an elucidation  
of every matter, a right guidance  
and a mercy for a believing people.

XII

## THE STORY OF MOSES

Have you received the story of Moses ?  
When he saw a fire, and said to his family  
" Tarry you here ; I observe a fire.  
Perhaps I shall bring you a brand from it,  
or discover at the fire guidance."  
When he came to it, a voice cried, " Moses !  
I am thy Lord ; put off thy shoes ;  
thou art in the holy valley Towa.  
I Myself have chosen thee ; therefore  
give thou ear to this Revelation.  
Verily I am God ; there is  
no god but I ; therefore worship  
Me, and perform the prayer of remembrance.  
The Hour is coming ; I would conceal it

that every soul may be recompensed  
 for its labours. Let none bar thee  
 from it, that believes not on it  
 but follows his own caprice,  
 or thou wilt perish. What is that,  
 Moses, thou hast in thy right hand ?”  
 “ It is my staff, Lord ”, said Moses.  
 “ I lean upon it, and with it  
 beat down leaves to feed my sheep ;  
 other uses also I find in it.”  
 God said, “ Cast it down, Moses !”  
 And Moses cast it, and behold  
 it was a serpent sliding.  
 God said, “ Take it, and fear not ;  
 We will restore it to its first state.  
 Now clasp thy hand to thy arm-pit ;  
 it shall come forth white, without evil.  
 That is a second Sign. So We would  
 show thee some of Our greatest Signs.  
 Go to Pharaoh ; he has waxed insolent.”  
 “ Lord, open my breast ”, said Moses,  
 “ and ease Thou for me my task.  
 Unloose the knot upon my tongue,  
 that they may understand my words.  
 Appoint for me of my folk a familiar,  
 Aaron, my brother ; by him confirm  
 my strength, and that he may share with me  
 in my task ; so shall we glorify  
 Thee and remember Thee abundantly.  
 Surely Thou seest into us.”  
 God said, “ Thou art granted, Moses,  
 thy petition. Already another time  
 We favoured thee, when We revealed  
 that was revealed unto thy mother :  
 ‘ Cast him into the ark, and cast him  
 into the river, and let the river  
 throw him up on the shore. An enemy  
 of Mine and his shall take him.’  
 And I loaded on thee My love  
 and to be nourished in My sight,  
 when thy sister went out, saying,  
 ‘ Shall I point you to one to nurse him ?’

So We returned thee to thy mother  
 that she might rejoice, and not grieve.  
 Then thou slewest a living soul,  
 and We delivered thee from affliction,  
 and tried thee with many trials.  
 Many years among the Midianites  
 thou didst sojourn, then camest hither,  
 Moses, according to My decree.  
 I have chosen thee for My service ;  
 go therefore, thou and thy brother,  
 with Our Signs, and neglect not  
 to remember Me. Go to Pharaoh,  
 for he has waxed insolent ; yet  
 speak gently to him, that haply  
 he may be mindful, or perchance fear."  
 " Dear Lord ", said Moses and Aaron,  
 " truly we fear he may exceed  
 against us, or wax insolent."  
 " Fear not ", said God. " Surely I  
 shall be with you, hearing and seeing.  
 So go you both to Pharaoh, and say,  
 ' We are the Messengers of your Lord ;  
 send forth with us the Sons of Israel  
 and torment them not ; we bring you  
 a Sign from your Lord ; and peace  
 be upon him who follows the Guidance.  
 It has been revealed to us that  
 punishment shall befall whoever  
 cries lies and turns his back. ' "

So We showed Pharaoh all Our Signs,  
 but he cried lies, and rejected them.  
 " Have you come, Moses ", he said,  
 " to drive us out of this land  
 by your magic ? We shall bring you  
 assuredly magic the like of it ;  
 therefore appoint a tryst between us  
 and you, a place mutually agreeable,  
 and we shall not fail it, neither you."  
 " Your tryst shall be upon the Feast Day ",  
 said Moses. " Let the people  
 be mustered at the high noon."

Pharaoh then withdrew, and gathered his guile. Therafter he came again, and Moses said to them, "O beware ! Forge not a lie against the One God, lest He destroy you with a chastisement. Whoso forges has ever failed." And they disputed upon their plan between them, and secreted their counsel saying, "These two men are magicians and their purpose is to drive you out of your land by their magic, and to extirpate your justest way. So gather your guile ; then come in battle-line. Whocver to-day gains the upper hand shall surely prosper."

They said, "Moses, either you cast, or we shall be the first to cast."  
"No", answered Moses. "Do you cast !"  
And lo, it seemed to him, by their magic their ropes and their staffs were sliding ; and Moses conceived a fear within him. We said unto him, "Fear not ; surely thou art the uppermost. Cast down what is in thy right hand, and it shall swallow what they have fashioned ; for they have fashioned only the guile of a magician, and the magician prospers not, wherever he goes." And the magicians cast themselves down prostrating. "We believe", they cried, "in the Lord of Aaron and Moses." Pharaoh said, "Do you believe in him before I give you leave ? Why, he is the chief of you, the same that taught you magic ; surely I will cut off your right hands and your left feet, then I will crucify you upon the trunks of palm-trees ; you shall know of a certainty which of us is mightier in chastisement, and more abiding." They declared, "We will not prefer you



over the clear proofs that have come to us,  
nor over Him who created us.  
Resolve then what you will resolve ;  
you can only resolve touching  
this present life. We believe  
in our Lord, that He may pardon us  
our offences, and the magic  
you constrained us to practise ;  
God is better, and more abiding."

Whosoever comes to his Lord  
a sinner, for him Gehenna  
awaits, wherein he shall neither  
die nor live. But whosoever  
comes to Him believing, and having  
wrought righteous works—for them  
await the most sublime degrees ;  
gardens of Eden, beneath which flow  
rivers, therein for ever abiding ;  
such is the reward of the self-purified.

Also We revealed unto Moses,  
" Go with My servants by night ; strike  
for them a dry path in the sea.  
Fear thou not overtaking ; be not afraid."  
Pharaoh followed them with his armies,  
and they were overwhelmed by the sea ;  
so Pharaoh led his people  
astray, and was no guide to them.

Sons of Israel, We delivered you  
from your enemy ; and We covenanted  
with you upon the mountain's right side,  
and sent down on you manna and quails.  
" Eat of the goodly things wherewith  
We have supplied you ; but exceed not  
therein, or My wrath shall alight on you ;  
and on whomsoever My wrath  
alights, that man is hurled to ruin.  
Yet I am forgiving to him who  
repents, and believes, and accomplishes  
righteousness, and at last is guided."

"What has sped thee far from thy people, Moses?" "They are upon my tracks", Moses answered. "I have hastened, Lord, only that I may please Thee." God said, "We have tempted thy people since thou didst leave them. The Samaritan has misled them into error."

Then Moses returned very angry and sorrowful to his people, saying, "My people, did your Lord not promise a fair promise to you? Did the time of the covenant seem so long to you, or did you desire that wrath should alight on you from your Lord, so that you failed in your promise to me?"

"We failed not in our promise to you", they answered, "of our volition; but we were loaded with fardels, even the ornaments of the people, and we threw them, as the Samaritan also threw them, into the fire.

Then he brought out for them a calf, a hody, lowing; and they cried, 'This is your god, and the god of Moses, whom he has forgotten.'"

What? Did they not see that thing returned no speech unto them, neither had power to mischief or profit them? Yet Aaron had aforetime said to them, "My people, you have been tempted by this thing, no more; surely your Lord is the Compassionate; therefore follow me, and obey my commandment!" "We will not cease", they said, "attendance upon it, till Moses returns to us."

Moses said, "What prevented you, Aaron, when you saw them in error, so that you did not follow after me? Did you then disobey my commandment?"

" Son of my mother ", Aaron answered,  
 " take me not by the beard, or the head !  
 I was fearful that you would say,  
 ' You have divided the Sons of Israel,  
 you have not attended my word.' "  
 Moses said, " And you, Samaritan,  
 what were you about ?" " I beheld  
 what they beheld not ", he replied,  
 " and I seized a handful of dust  
 from the Messenger's track, and cast it  
 into the thing. So my soul prompted me."  
 " Depart !" cried Moses. " It shall be yours  
 all this life to cry ' Untouchable !'  
 And thereafter a tryst awaits you  
 you cannot fail to keep. Behold  
 your god, upon whom all the day  
 you danced attendance ! We will burn it,  
 and scatter its ashes into the sea.  
 Your God is only the One God ;  
 there is no god, but He alone  
 who in His knowledge embraces all things."

xx 9-98

## MOSES ON SINAI

Now when Moses came at the time We had appointed, and  
 his Lord spoke with him, he said, " My Lord, give me sight,  
 that I may look upon Thee." God said, " Thou shalt not see  
 Me ; but look upon the mountain, and if it abides still in  
 its place, then thou shalt see Me." And when his Lord  
 revealed Himself to the mountain, He turned it into levelled  
 dust. And Moses fell down in a swoon.

And when he returned to himself, he said, " Glory be to  
 Thee ! I have turned unto Thee ; I am the first of the  
 believers."

God said, " Moses, I have chosen thee above all the people  
 to receive My messages, and to hear My word. Accept  
 therefore that I have brought thee, and be thankful."

And We wrote for him upon the tablets an admonition  
 concerning every thing, and an exposition of every thing.

vii 139-142

## MOSES AND GOD'S SERVANT

And when Moses said to his servant,  
"I will not leave you till I reach  
the Confluence of the Two Seas,  
even though I should walk for years."  
When they reached the Confluence thereof  
they forgot the fish they had taken,  
and it took its way burrowing  
to the sea. When they had passed  
Moses said to his servant, "Bring us  
our breakfast! We have certainly  
found fatigue from this journey."  
"What think you?" the servant said.  
"When we took shelter at the Rock  
I forgot the fish—none but  
Satan caused me to forget  
to mention it—and it took  
its way to the sea wonderfully."  
Moses said, "Even that were we  
seeking." And they both reverted  
retracing their footsteps.

They found one of Our servants  
on whom We had bestowed  
a Mercy, and taught him  
Knowledge springing from Us.  
Moses said to him, "May I  
follow you, that you may teach me  
of the things you have been taught  
for a guidance?" He answered,  
"You will never be able  
to bear with me. How should you  
endure that you embrace not  
in your experience?" Moses said,  
"God willing, you will find me  
a patient man, not disobeying  
you, whatever you may order."  
"If you follow me", the other  
said, "do not question me  
on any matter, until I  
myself take up with you

its mention." So they departed ;  
until, when they were embarked  
in the ship, he holed it.  
" Have you holed it ", cried Moses,  
" so as to drown all hands ?  
Well, you have certainly done  
a strange and monstrous thing."  
" Did I not tell you ", My servant  
answered, " that you would never  
be able to bear with me ?"  
" Do not take me up ", said Moses,  
" that I forgot ; do not force me  
to a matter too hard for me."  
So they departed ; until,  
when they encountered a lad,  
he slew him. Moses cried,  
" Have you killed a soul innocent  
of taking life ? Well, certainly  
now you have done an atrocity."  
" Did I not tell you ", My servant  
answered, " that you would never  
be able to bear with me ?"  
" If hereafter ", said Moses,  
" I question you concerning  
any matter, take me no more  
for your companion. There, now  
you have received my excuse." So  
they departed ; until, when they  
came to the people of a city,  
they asked the people for food ;  
but they refused to receive them  
in hospitality. There they found  
a wall about to collapse ;  
and the stranger shored it up.  
" If you had wanted ", cried Moses,  
" you could have taken a wage for it."  
" This is the parting ", My servant  
answered, " between me and you.  
Now I am going to inform you  
of the explanation of that  
you were unable to bear with.  
As for the ship, it belonged

to certain poor men who toiled upon the sea ; and I desired to damage it, for behind them was a king, who impounded every ship forcibly.

As for the lad, his parents were believers, and we feared he might offend them by rebellion and ingratitude ; we desired that their Lord should give them in exchange for him a son purer, and nearer to piety. As for the wall, it belonged to two orphan lads in the city, and beneath it was a treasure theirs ; their father was righteous ; and your Lord desired that they should grow to manhood, and then extract their treasure, a Mercy from your Lord. I did nothing of my own volition. There is the explanation of that you were unable to bear with."

XVIII 59-81

## MEDITATION ON MOSES

TA SIN MEM :

These are the Signs of the perspicuous Book.  
We will recite to you somewhat of the story of Moses and Pharaoh truthfully, for a believing people.

Now Pharaoh had exalted himself in the land ; and he divided its people into parties, abasing one portion of them ; he slaughtered their sons, and spared only their women.

For Pharaoh was a worker of corruption.  
And We desired to bestow Our favour  
upon those who had been abased  
in that land, and to appoint them  
leaders, and make them inheritors ;  
to establish them in the land,  
and to show Pharaoh and Haman  
and their armies that they dreaded  
should befall them by reason of them.

Then revealed We to the mother of Moses, saying, " Suckle him ; and when thou fearest for him, cast him upon the river. And fear thou not, neither be thou sorrowful ; for We shall restore him to thee, and shall appoint him to be one of Our Envoys."

And the house of Pharaoh picked him up, to be an enemy to them and a sorrow.

Verily Pharaoh and Haman,  
yea, and their hosts were all sinners.

Pharaoh's wife said, " The child is a joy to me and to thee. Do not slay him ; haply he will profit us, or we will take him for a son."

They were aware not what they did.

But the heart of the mother of Moses became empty, and almost would she have disclosed him ; but We strengthened her heart that she might be a believer.

She therefore said to her sister, " Follow after him." And she beheld him from afar off, but the others knew nothing of this.

Now We had forbidden to him aforetime that he should be suckled by strange women. The sister of Moses thereupon said, " Shall I guide you to the people of a household who will take charge of him for you, and be good to him ?"

So We restored him to his mother, that she might rejoice and not be sorrowful, and that she might know that the promise of God is true.

But the most part of them know it not.

And when he was grown to manhood, and in the perfection of his strength, We bestowed on him Wisdom and Knowledge.

So We reward the well-doers.

And he entered into the city, at a time when its people were unheeding, and found there two men fighting ; the one was of his own party, and the other was of his enemies. And the one that was of his party shouted for help against the one that was of his enemies ; and Moses ran him through, and slew him, saying, " This is the work of Satan."

Verily Satan is an enemy,  
a perspicuous misleader.

Then Moses cried, " Lord, I have done evil against my own soul. Forgive me !" And God forgave him.

Verily He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.

Moses said, " Lord, inasmuch as Thou hast bestowed Thy favour upon me, I will never be a supporter of the sinners."

And the next morning Moses was in the city, being fearful and vigilant ; and behold, he who had implored his succour on the previous day cried out to him again. Moses said to him, " Truly thou art a perspicuous trouble-maker."

But when he would have assaulted the man that was an enemy of them both, the man said, " Moses, dost thou intend to slay me, as thou slewest a living soul yesterday ? Thou desirest only to be a tyrant in the land ; thou desirest not to be a reformer."

Then came a man from the farthest part of the city running, and he said, " Moses, the nobles are conspiring against thee to slay thee. Go forth ; I give thee good counsel."

So Moses went forth from the city, being fearful and vigilant ; and he cried, " Lord, deliver me from the unjust people."

And when he came towards Midian he said, " Haply the Lord will guide me in the right path."

And when he came down to the waters of Midian, he found there a company of men watering their beasts. .

He found also two women holding back their flocks, and



said to them, "How is it with you?" They answered him, "We may not water our beasts until the shepherds have brought up their flocks; and our father is an old man, great with years."

So Moses watered their beasts for them; then he turned away to the shade, saying, "Lord, I have need of whatever good Thou shalt have sent down upon me."

And one of the two women came to him, walking modestly, and said, "My father invites thee, that he may reward thee with the hire for thy watering for us." So when Moses came to him and related to him his story, he said, "Fear not; thou hast been delivered from the unjust people."

One of the two women said, "Father, do thou hire him; the best man thou canst hire is the one who is strong and trusty."

He said, "I desire to marry thee to one of these my two daughters, upon the condition that thou hirest thyself to me for eight years. If thou completest ten years, that shall be of thy own accord; for I desire not to press hard on thee. God willing, thou shalt find me to be a righteous man."

Moses said, "So be it between me and thee. Whichever of the two terms I fulfil, it shall be no injustice against me. God is guardian of what we say."

Now when Moses had fulfilled the term, and departed with his household, he descried afar upon the side of the mountain a fire. He therefore said to his household, "Sojourn here; for I have descried afar off a fire. Haply I shall come to you with news of it, or a brand from the fire, that you may warm yourselves."

And when he came to the fire, a Voice called to him from the right bank of the watercourse in the sacred hollow, coming out of the tree, "Moses, I am God, the Lord of the Worlds.

Cast down thy staff." And when he saw it trembling, as though it were a spirit, he turned his back and did not wait. "Moses, come forward, and fear not; thou art in security.

Slip thy hand into thy bosom, and it shall come forth white, without evil. Press thy arm against thee, that thou be not afraid. These shall be two proofs from thy Lord to Pharaoh and his nobles, for they are a perverse people."

Moses said, "Lord, I have slain a living soul among them, and I fear that they will slay me.

Moreover my brother Aaron is more eloquent than I. Send

him with me, as a helper, that he may declare my truthfulness; for I fear they will say I am a liar."

God said, "We will strengthen thy arm by means of thy brother; and We will put power into you, and they shall not reach unto you, because of Our Signs. You, and they that follow you, shall be the victors."

When Moses came to them with Our evidential Signs, they said, "This is naught but forged magic. We have not heard of such, no, not among our forefathers of old."

Moses said, "My Lord knows very well who comes with Guidance from Him, and who shall possess the Last Abode. Surely the wrongdoers will not prosper."

Pharaoh said, "Nobles, I know not that you have any god beside me. Kindle me a fire, Haman, upon the clay, and make for me a tower, that haply I may mount up to the god of Moses; for verily I deem him to be a liar."

And he waxed proud, he and his hosts, in the land wrongfully; and they deemed that they should not be brought back to Us.

But We seized him and his hosts, and flung them into the sea.

See what was the end of wrongdoers!

And We made them leaders calling men unto the Fire.

On the Day of Resurrection they  
shall not find any to succour them.

And We pursued them in this world with a curse.

On the Day of Resurrection they  
shall be shown forth in their ugliness.

And We gave to Moses the Book, after that We had destroyed the former generations, to open men's eyes and to guide them, and for a mercy, that haply they might be mindful.

Thou wast not upon the West Slope  
when We decreed unto Moses  
the Commandment, nor witnessed it;  
but We raised up generations,  
and long their lives continued.

Neither wast thou a dweller  
among the Midianites, reciting  
Our Signs to them : but Ourselves  
did send to them a Messenger.  
Thou wast not on the mountainslope  
when We called ; but for a Mercy  
from thy Lord thou comest  
to warn a people, to whom  
no Warner has come before thee,  
that haply they may be mindful.  
Else, did a disaster light  
upon them, for the deeds their hands  
wrought aforetime, they might say,  
“ Lord, why hast Thou never sent  
a Messenger to us, that we  
might follow Thy Signs, and so  
be reckoned among the believers ?”  
Yet, when the Truth came to them  
from Ourselves, they said, “ Why  
has he not been given the like  
that Moses was given ?” But they,  
did they not disbelieve also  
what Moses was given aforetime ?  
They said, “ A pair of magics  
mutally supporting each other.”  
They said, “ We disbelieve both.”

SAY : “ Bring you a Book from God  
that shall guide better than these ;  
then follow it, if you are truthful.”  
Then, if they do not reply to thee,  
know for sure that they are following  
their caprices ; and who wanders  
further astray than he who  
follows his own caprice, unguided  
by God ? Certainly God  
guides not the unjust people.

Now We have brought the Word to them  
that haply they may be mindful.  
Those to whom We gave the Book  
before this, they believe on it,

and whenever it is recited  
to them, they say, " We believe  
on it ; it is indeed the Truth  
from our Lord ; even before it  
we were already submissive."  
These shall be given twofold  
their reward, for they were steadfast  
and averted evil with good,  
and dispensed bountifully  
of the things We provided them.  
When they hear foolish chatter  
they turn from it, and declare,  
" We have our deeds, and you  
take yours ! Peace be upon you ;  
we have no desire for the ignorant."  
Thou guidest not whom thou likest  
but God guides whom He will ;  
very well He knows who are guided.

They said, " If we follow Guidance  
with thee, we shall be snatched  
out of our own land ! " Have We  
not given them a Sanctuary  
inviolable to hold,  
unto which are collected  
the good fruits of every kind,  
a provision even from Us ?  
But the most part of them know not.

How many a city We  
have destroyed, that flourished  
in insolent ease ! Those  
their dwellings are lying yonder,  
undwelt in since they departed  
or nearly. We Ourselves  
are the only inheritors.  
Yet thy Lord never destroyed  
the cities, before He sent  
in their mother-city a Messenger  
to recite to them Our Signs ;  
never did We destroy the cities  
save that their people were unjust.

Whatever you have been given  
is the enjoyment and the ornament  
of this lower life ; but what  
rests with God is better, and more  
enduring ; will you not have reason ?

What ? Shall he, whom We have promised  
a fair promise, and receives it,  
be likened to him whom We  
granted enjoyment in this world  
of this world's goods, and after  
upon the Day of Resurrection  
shall be summoned before the Judgment ?  
God shall call to them on that day,  
saying, " Where now are My partners  
whom you so boldly pretended ?"  
And they against whom the Word  
is realised shall answer,  
" Lord, those are they whom we  
led astray ; we led them astray  
even as we strayed. We cry  
our innocence unto Thee ;  
it was not us they worshipped."  
Then it shall be said, " Call you  
now upon your God's partners !" They  
shall call on them, but they  
no answer shall give to them ;  
and they shall see the Torment.  
If they had been only guided !  
God shall call to them on that day,  
saying, " What did you answer  
to the Envoys ?" But that day  
all tidings shall be darkened  
for them, neither will they then  
so much as question each other.

But whosoever repents,  
and believes, and works righteousness,  
haply he shall be of the Blessed.  
And thy Lord creates whatever  
He will, and chooses ; to them no  
choice ever belonged. Glory .

to God, who is highly exalted  
above all that they associate.  
And thy Lord knows what their  
breasts hide, and what they publish.  
He is God ; no god is there  
beside Him ; His is the praise  
in the former as in the latter  
life also ; His is the Judgment,  
and to Him you shall be returned.

SAY : " If God should set over you  
night unceasing, even until  
the Day of Resurrection, what  
god other than God shall bring  
light to you ? Will you not listen ?"

SAY : " If God should set over you  
day unceasing, even until  
the Day of Resurrection, what  
god other than God shall bring you  
night to rest in ? Will you not see ?"

Of His mercy He has made for you  
night and day, for your repose  
and to seek after His bounty,  
and that haply you will be grateful.

God shall call to them on that day,  
saying, " Where now are My partners  
whom you so boldly pretended ?"  
We shall draw out of every nation  
a witness, and say, " Bring your  
proof !" And they shall realise  
that the Truth is God's alone ;  
and they shall be deserted  
by the false things they forged.

Now Korah was of the people of Moses ; and he became  
insolent towards them, for We had given him treasures such  
that the very keys would be too great a burden for a company  
of men endowed with strength. When his people said to him,  
" Exult not, for God loves not the exultant ;

but seek, by means of that God has given thee, the Last Abode. And forget not thy portion in this present world ; and do good, even as God has been good to thee. Seek not corruption in the earth ; for God loves not the workers of corruption."

Korah answered, "What I have been given I have been given only because of a knowledge that is in me."

What? Did he not know that God  
before him destroyed generations  
stronger than he and more numerous  
in mass? Yet are the guilty  
not questioned about their sins.

And Korah went out to his people in his ornament. And those who desired the lower life cried out, "Would that we had the like of that which Korah has been given! Surely he is possessed of a great fortune."

But those who had been given Knowledge said, "Woe upon you! The reward of God is better worth for him who believes and works righteousness; and only the steadfast shall receive it."

And We opened the earth to swallow him and his dwelling, and he had no host to succour him, being apart from God; he was indeed not among the succoured.

And on the morrow those who had longed to be in his place the day before cried out, "Ah, verily God expands and measures of His sustenance to whom He wills of His servants. Had God not been gracious to us, He would have caused us to be swallowed up also. Ah, verily the unbelievers do not prosper."

That Last Abode We bestow  
on those who desire not insolence  
in the earth, neither corruption;  
and the End is to the godfearing.  
Whosoever brings a good work  
shall receive that which is better,  
and whosoever brings an evil  
they that have done evil shall be  
recompensed even as they have done.

He who imposed the Recitation  
 upon thee, shall surely bring thee  
 again to a place of homing.  
 SAY : " My Lord knows very well  
 who comes with Guidanec, and who  
 is still in perspicuous error."  
 Thou didst not hope that the Book  
 would be conveyed to thee, except  
 it is a Mercy from thy Lord.  
 Be not therefore a supporter  
 of the unbelievers ; nor let them  
 hinder thee from the Signs of God  
 after they have been sent down  
 to thee. Call unto thy Lord,  
 and be not of those confounding  
 other gods with the One God.  
 Call not upon any other  
 god, with God ; there is no god  
 but He. All things perish,  
 except His Face. His is the Judgment,  
 and to Him you shall be returned.

XXVIII

## SOLOMON

And We bestowed on David and Solomon a Knowledge ;  
 and they said, " Praise be to God, who has preferred us over  
 many of His servants that believe."

And Solomon inherited from David ; and he said, " O men,  
 we have been taught the language of the birds, and on us has  
 been bestowed of every thing. Surely this is the perspicuous  
 favour."

And to Solomon were mustered his armics, of spirits,  
 mortals and birds, disposed severally in order.

Until, when they were come to the Valley of the Ants, an  
 ant spoke, " O you ants, enter your dwelling-places, lest  
 Solomon and his armics crush you unawares."

But Solomon smiled, laughing at its saying ; and he said,



"Lord, put it into my heart that I may be thankful to Thee for the blessing wherewith Thou hast blessed me, and my father and mother before me ; and that I may work righteousness that Thou shalt approve ; and of Thy mercy make me to enter the number of Thy righteous servants."

And Solomon sought through the birds ; and he said, "How is it come to pass that I do not see the hoopoe ? Is it among the absent ones ?

Surely I shall punish it with a severe punishment, or I will slaughter it, unless it comes to me with a perspicuous authorisation."

But after tarrying no long time the hoopoe came to him, and said, "I have comprehended that which thou comprehendest not. I have come to thee from Sheba, bringing sure tidings.

I found there a woman reigning over them, endued with every manner of things, and possessing a glorious throne.

I found her and her people prostrating to the sun, in the stead of God. Satan has made their works to seem comely to them, and has turned them away from the right path, and they are not guided,

so that they prostrate not to God, who brings forth that which is hidden in the heavens and the earth, and knows what you conceal and what you reveal.

God : there is no god but He, the Lord of the Glorious Throne."

Solomon said, "We shall see whether thou hast spoken truly, or whether thou art a liar.

Go, take this my letter, and deliver it to them ; then turn away from them, and see what they reply."

The queen said, "My nobles, an honourable letter has been delivered to me ;

it is from Solomon, and it is 'In the Name of God, the All-Compassionate, the Merciful !

Be not overbearing towards me, and come you to me submissive.' "

The queen said, "My nobles, give me your verdict concerning my affairs ; I will not decide on any matter until you testify to me."

They said, "We are possessors of strength and possessors of

stout valour ; but the command is thine. Consider therefore what thou wilt command."

She said, "The kings, whenever they enter into a city, lay it waste and make the great ones of its people lowly. Even so they will do.

Now I will send unto them an offering, and shall see what the envoys bring back."

When the messenger came to Solomon, Solomon said, "Do you supply me with wealth? Yet that which God has given me is better than that which He has given you ; but still you exult in your offering.

Return thou unto them, and we will verily come against them with hosts which they cannot withstand ; and we will drive them out of their land in humiliation and contempt."

Solomon also said, "Nobles, which of you will bring me her throne, ere they come to me in submission?"

One of the spirits, that was an efreet, said, "I will bring it to thee, ere thou arisest from thy place ; I am powerful to do it, and trusty."

One said, that had knowledge of the Book, "I will bring it to thee, ere thy glance is returned to thee." And when Solomon saw it established beside him, he said, "This is of God's grace to me, that He may make trial of me, whether I shall give thanks or be ungrateful. Whosoever gives thanks, gives thanks only for his own soul ; and whosoever is ungrateful, my Lord is Self-sufficient and bountiful."

Solomon said also, "Disguise unto her her throne, that we may see whether she is guided, or whether she is one of those who are not guided."

And when she came, it was said to her, "Is thy throne thus?" She said, "It is very like." "And we have been given the Knowledge before her, and we are in submission."

So said Solomon ; but that which she had been worshipping, apart from God, diverted her ; indeed, she was of an unbelieving people.

It was said to her, "Enter the palace." And when she saw it, she supposed it to be a spreading water ; and she bared her legs. Solomon said, "It is a palace, smoothed with crystal."

She said, "Lord, I have done evil unto myself ; now I submit myself with Solomon to God, the Lord of the Worlds."

XXVII 20-45

## DAVID AND SOLOMON

We gave David a Grace from Us : " O mountains, repeat with him his psalms, and you hards ! " And We softened for him the iron : " Make thou trailing coats of mail, and dispose well the links. And do you righteousness ; for I see into what you do."

And to Solomon the wind ; its morning course a month, and its evening course a month. And We made to flow for him the Founts of Molten Brass. And of the spirits some laboured before him, by his Lord's leave—and such of them as swerved aside from Our commandment We would cause to taste the torment of the Blaze—

fashioning for him what things he willed, places of worship and images, and porringers like water-troughs, and anchored cooking-pots : " Labour, O household of David, gratefully ; few are the grateful among My servants."

And when We decreed for Solomon to die, naught indicated to them that he was dead but the Beast of the Earth devouring his staff ; and when he fell down, the spirits perceived that if only they had known the Unseen, they would not have continued in humbling torment.

XXXIV 10-13

## JESUS

God chose Adam and Noah  
and the House of Ahraham  
and the House of Imran  
above all creatures,  
the seed of one another :  
God hears, and knows.

When the wife of Imran  
said, " Lord, I have vowed  
to thee, in dedication,  
what is within my womb.  
Receive Thou this from me ;  
Thou hearest, and knowest."  
And when she gave birth to her

she said, " Lord, I have given  
birth to her, a female."  
(And God knew very well  
what she had given birth to.)  
" The male is not as the female ;  
and I have named her Mary,  
and commend her to Thee  
with her seed, to protect them  
from the accursed Satan."

He had received the child  
with gracious favour,  
and by His goodness  
she grew up comely,  
Zachariah taking  
charge of her. Whenever  
he went in to her  
in the Sanctuary  
he found her provisioned.  
" Mary ", he said,  
" how comes this to you ?"  
" From God ", she answered.  
Truly God provisions  
whomsoever He will  
without reckoning.

Then Zachariah  
prayed to his Lord  
saying, " Lord, give me  
of Thy goodness  
a goodly offspring.  
Yea, Thou hearest  
prayer." And the Angels  
called to him, standing  
in the Sanctuary  
at worship, " Lo,  
God gives thee good tidings  
of John, who shall confirm  
a Word of God,  
a chief, and chaste,  
a prophet, righteous."

" Lord ", said Zachariah,  
" how shall I have a son,  
seeing I am an old man  
and my wife is barren ?"  
" Even so ", God answered,  
" God does what He will."  
" Lord ", said Zachariah,  
" appoint to me a Sign."  
" Thy Sign ", God answered,  
" is that thou shalt not  
speak, save by tokens,  
to men for three days.  
And mention thy Lord  
oft, and give glory  
at evening and dawn."

And when the Angels said,  
" Mary, God has chosen  
thee, and purified  
thee ; He has chosen  
thee above all women.  
Mary, supplicate  
thy Lord, prostrating  
and bowing before Him."

(That is of the tidings  
of the Unseen, that We  
reveal to thee ; for thou  
wast not with them, when  
they were casting quills  
which of them should have  
charge of Mary ; thou  
wast not with them, when  
they were disputing.)

When the Angels said,  
" Mary, God gives the good  
tidings of a Word from Him  
whose name is Messiah,  
Jesus, Son of Mary ;  
high honoured shall he be  
in this world and the next,

near stationed to God.  
 He shall speak to men  
 in the cradle, and of age,  
 and righteous he shall be."  
 "Lord", said Mary,  
 "how shall I have a son  
 seeing no man has  
 touched me?" "Even so",  
 God answered, "God  
 creates what He will.  
 When He decrees a thing  
 He does but say to it  
 'Be!' and it is.  
 And He will teach him  
 the Scriptures, Wisdom,  
 the Torah, the Gospel,  
 to be a Messenger  
 to the Sons of Israel  
 saying, 'I have come to  
 you with a Sign from  
 your Lord. I will create  
 for you out of clay as  
 the likeness of birds;  
 then I will breathe into  
 it, and it will be a  
 bird, by the leave of God.  
 I will also heal  
 the blind and the leper,  
 and bring to life the  
 dead, by the leave of God.  
 I will inform you too  
 of what things you eat,  
 and what you treasure up  
 in your houses. Truly  
 there is a Sign for you  
 if you will be believers.  
 Likewise confirming the  
 truth of the Torah that  
 is before me, and to make  
 lawful to you certain  
 things that before were  
 forbidden unto you.

I have come to you with  
a Sign from your Lord ;  
so fear you God, and  
obey you me. Truly  
God is my Lord and  
your Lord ; so worship Him ;  
this is a straight path.”

And when Jesus perceived  
their unbelief, he said,  
“ Who will be my helpers  
unto God ?” The Apostles  
said, “ We will be helpers  
of God ; we believe in God ;  
witness thou our submission.  
Lord, we believe in that  
Thou hast sent down, and we  
follow the Messenger.  
Inscribe us therefore with  
those who bear witness.”

And they devised, and God  
devised, and God is  
the best of devisers.

When God said, “ Jesus,  
I will take thee to Me  
and will raise thee to Me,  
and will purify thee of  
those who believe not. I  
will set thy followers  
above the unbelievers  
till the Resurrection Day.  
Then unto Me shall you  
return, and I will judge  
between you, as to what  
you were disputing on.  
I will chastise them with  
a severe chastisement  
in this world and the next ;  
they shall have no helpers.”

(But as for the believers  
who do righteous deeds,  
He will pay them in full  
their wages ; and God  
loves not the evildoers.)

This We recite to thee  
of Signs and wise Remembrance.

Truly, the similitude  
of Jesus, in God's sight,  
is as Adam's likeness ;  
He created him of dust,  
then said He unto him,  
" Be !" and he was.

The Truth is of God :  
be not of the doubters.

III 30-51

## MARY

And mention in the Book Mary  
when she withdrew from her people  
to an eastern place,

and she took a veil apart from them ;  
and We sent unto her Our Spirit  
that presented himself to her  
a man without fault.

She said, " I take refuge in  
the All-Compassionate from thee !  
If thou fearest God . . . "

" I am a Messenger ", he answered,



“ come from thy Lord, to bestow on thee  
a Boy most pure.”

Mary said, “ How shall I have a son  
whom no man has touched, neither  
have I been unchaste ?”

The Spirit answered, “ So thy Lord has said :  
‘ Easy is that for Me ; and that We  
may appoint him a Sign unto men,  
and a Mercy from Us ; it is  
a thing decreed.’ ”

So she conceived him, and withdrew with him  
to a distant place.

And the hirthpangs surprised her by  
the trunk of the palm-tree. She cried,  
“ Would I have died ere this, and become  
a thing forgotten !”

But the one that was below her  
called to her, “ Nay, do not sorrow ;  
see, God has set below thee  
a rivulet.

Shake also to thee the palm-trunk,  
and there shall come tumbling upon thee  
dates fresh and ripe.

Eat therefore, and drink, and be  
comforted ; and if thou shouldst see  
any mortal,

say, ‘ I have vowed to the Compassionate  
a fast, and to-day I will speak not  
to any man.’ ”

Then she brought the child to her folk  
carrying him ; and they cried together,  
“ Mary, thou hast surely committed  
a monstrous thing !

Sister of Aaron, thy father was not  
a wicked man, nor was thy mother  
a woman unchaste."

Mary pointed to the child then ;  
but they said, " How shall we speak  
to one who is still in the cradle,  
a little child ?"

The child said, " I am God's servant ;  
God has given me the Scripture, and  
made me a prophet.

Blessed He has made me, wherever  
I may be, and He has enjoined me  
to pray, and to give the alms, so  
long as I live,

and likewise to cherish my mother ;  
He has not made me overbearing,  
neither impious.

Peace be upon me, the day I was born,  
and the day I die, and the day I am  
raised up alive !"

XIX 16-34

## THE JEWS

The people of the Book demand of thee to send down upon them a Book out of heaven. They also demanded of Moses a greater thing than that ; they said, " Show us God, openly " ; but the thunderbolt took them for their wickedness. Then they took unto themselves the Calf, after that the clear proofs had come to them ; yet We pardoned them that, and brought Moses a perspicuous authorisation.

We likewise lifted up over them the Mountain, as a sign of their Covenant, and said to them, " Enter the gate prostrating." Also said We to them, " Transgress not upon

the Sabbath." And We took from them a solemn Covenant.

But for their breaking their Covenant, and disbelieving God's Signs, and slaying the Prophets unrightfully, and for their saying, "Our hearts are uncircumcised"—nay indeed, God has sealed their hearts because of their unbelief, and they will not believe save a few only—

And for their unbelief, and that they spoke against Mary a monstrous calumny,

As also that they said, "We slew the Messiah Jesus Son of Mary, the Messenger of God"—and they slew him not, neither crucified him, but his likeness was made to appear unto them. They that are at variance concerning him are certainly in doubt about him; but they have no knowledge of him, only they follow supposition. They did not truly slay him; indeed, God raised him up to Himself; God is mighty, wise.

None is there among the people of the Book who shall not believe in him before his death, and on the Day of Resurrection he shall be a witness against them—

For a wickedness committed by certain ones of them that followed Jewry, We forbade to them certain goodly things that were formerly made lawful to them, as also for their shunning much the Way of God,

And for their taking usury, that they had been forbidden to do, and devouring the substance of people falsely; and We have prepared for the unbelievers among them a painful chastisement.

But those of them that are firmly set in Knowledge, and the believers who believe in what has been sent down to thee, and what was sent down before thee, who perform the Prayer and give the Alms, and who believe in God and the Last Day—to those We shall give a mighty reward.

IV 152-160

## THE CHRISTIANS

Unbelievers are they who say, "God the third is of three". No god is there but One God. If they cease not from what they

say, those of them who disbelieve shall surely be touched by a painful chastisement.

Will they not turn unto God and ask His forgiveness? For God is forgiving, merciful.

The Messiah, Son of Mary, was simply a Messenger, before whom other Messengers had also come and gone. His Mother was a Saint. Both ate ordinary food. Behold how We make clear to them the Signs; then behold how they are turned away.

SAY: "Do you worship, apart from God, that which possesses no power to mischief or profit you? God is the Hearer, the All-Knowing."

SAY: "O people of the Book, exaggerate not in your religion other than the Truth, and follow not the caprices of a people who strayed before and have led many astray, and strayed from the right path."

Accursed were those of the Sons of Israel who disbelieved, by the tongue of David and Jesus Son of Mary; that on account of their disobedience and transgression; for they desisted not from the detestable things they did; wretched indeed were the things they did.

Thou wilt see many of them taking as friends unbelievers. Wretched indeed is that which themselves have sent forward to their account; for God is wrathful against them; in the Chastisement they shall abide for ever.

If they had believed in God and the Prophet, and that which has been sent down to him, they would have not taken them to themselves as friends; but the most part of them are perverse.

Thou wilt find the most violently hostile to the believers to be the Jews, and those who associate other gods with God; and thou wilt find the nearest in affection to the believers to be the ones who say, "We are Christians". That is because among them are priests and monks, and because they are not puffed up.

When they hear what has been sent down to the Messenger, thou wilt see their eyes overflowing with tears for the Truth they know, saying, "Lord, we believe; write us down among them that testify."

Why should we not believe in God, and the Truth that is come to us, hoping that our Lord will gather us in with the righteous people?"

God has rewarded them for what they say : Gardens beneath which rivers are flowing, to dwell therein for ever. That is the recompense of the well-doers ; but those who disbelieve and ery lies to Our Signs, they are the patrons of the Furnace.

v 76-88

## THE MUSLIMS

O believers, fear God as He should be feared, and die you not save in submission.

Hold fast all together to God's rope, and do not scatter. Remember God's goodness towards you when you were enemies, and He made concord between your hearts, and by His goodness you became brothers.

You were on the verge of a pit of Fire, and He reseued you from it. Even so does God make plain to you His Signs ; haply you will be guided.

Let there be one Community of you, calling unto good, commanding beneficence, and forbidding what is detestable ; they, even they are the Blessed.

And be not like those that scattered and fell into difference, after that the Clear Proofs had come to them ; they, even they shall be mightily chastised,

On a day when some faces shall be white, and some faces shall be black. Those whose faces are black, to them it shall be said, "What, did you disbelieve after your believing ? Taste then the chastisement for your unbelief."

But those whose faces are white, they shall be in God's Mercy, wherein they shall dwell for ever.

These are God's Signs which We recite to thee rightfully ; God desires not wrong to any creature.

To God belongs whatever is in the beavens, and whatever is in the earth ; and to God shall all matters be returned.

You are the best community that has been brought forth for mankind ; you command beneficence, and forbid what is detestable, and you believe in God. If the people of the Book had believed it would have been better for them. Some of them are believers, but the most part of them are perverse.

III 97-106

## THE HOLY WAR

O believers, take your precaution ; then move forward in companies, or move forward all together.

Some of you there are who are slack ; and if a misfortune befalls you, such a one will say, " God has been good to me, in that I was not an onlooker with them."

But if a favour from God befalls you he will say, as if there had never been any affection between you and him, " Would that I had been with them, to attain a mighty success !"

Let them fight in the Way of God who sell the present life for the life to come ; and whosoever fights in the Way of God and is slain, or conquers, to him We shall bring a mighty reward.

How is it with you that you do not fight in the Way of God, and for the men, women and children who, being abased, say, " Lord, bring us forth from this city whose people are unjust, and appoint us a protector from Thee, and appoint us a succourer from Thee " ?

The believers fight in the Way of God, and unbelievers fight in the Way of the Devil. So fight you against the friends of Satan ; the craft of Satan is feeble indeed.

IV 73-78

## VICTORY

When comes the succour of God and victory  
and thou seest men entering God's religion in throngs,  
then magnify the praise of thy Lord, and seek His forgiveness ; for He turns again unto men.

cx

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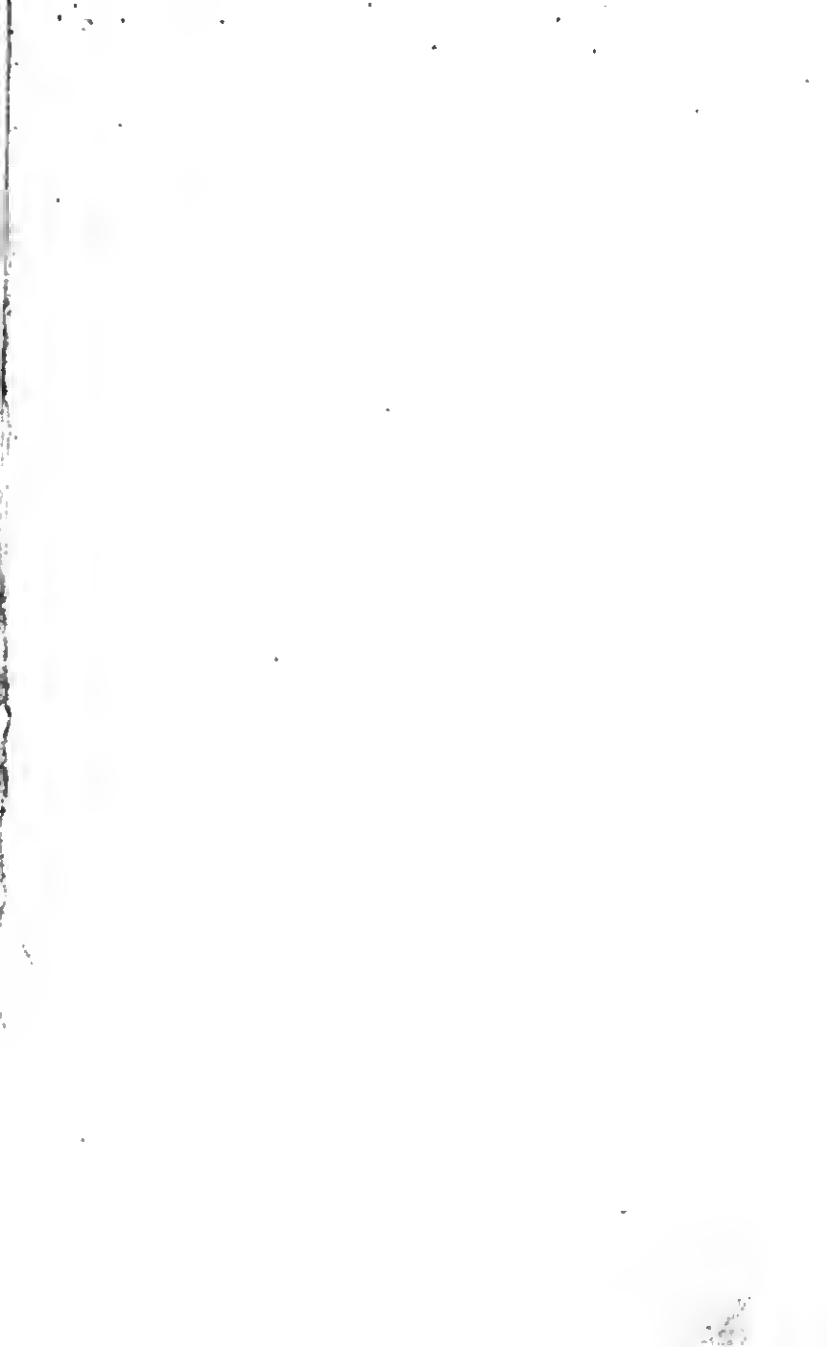
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